SPAWN & SURF SUMO

#149

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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McFARLANE TOYS
TODD SHOWS 'EM ALL HOW IT'S DONE!

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DOUG WILDEY
HIS LAST INTERVIEW!

GREEN LANTERN CREATOR
MARTIN NODELL
THE PILLSBURY DOUGHBOY IS HIS, TOO!

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CREDITS

COMICS INTERVIEW

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT
editor/publisher

conceived by
JIM SALICRUP
editorial and design consultant emeritus

DARREL L BOATZ
MARK LUCAS
associate editors

LOU MOUGIN
ROBERT ROWE
H.S. VON TRAUERNICHT
contributing editors

POWERHOUSE GRAPHICS
MACHINE WOLF GRAPHICS
art & tone direction

DON MARKSTEIN
typography

GORTEL
GUILLIA
HAMILTON
SCHRIDLOUX
production

TERRY FITZGERALD
PATRICIA JERES
ED O'NEAL
JOHN OTT
MARCO PALMIERi
PAM RUTT
MELANIE SIMMONS
ELAINE WELLMAN
special thanks

P. PUPPY
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DR. SLAM & MR. ED
home on the range

J R MATHER
international marketing director

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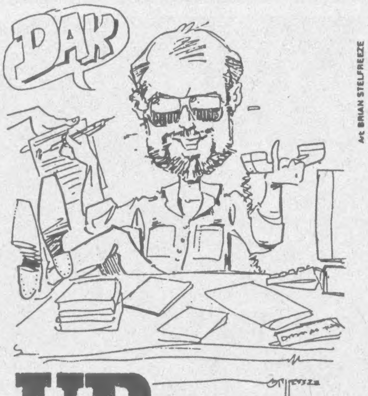

Art BRIAN STELFREEZE

UP FRONT

I was reading the latest issue of SPAWN the other day, and enjoying the open "action feel" of the series. As I flipped the pages, I took note of the layouts, the storytelling, the art style. And came to a conclusion:

Todd McFarlane is this generation's **Jack Kirby.**

Unlike the legions of comics artists who have *imitated* the inimitable **Kirby** style, Todd has achieved the larger-than-life sense of high-octane superhero storytelling on his own terms — not by simply aping Jack.

There is a cartoony, exaggerated style to the art. And **McFarlane** has tweaked anatomy to suit his purposes, in a way that's every bit as over-the-top as **Kirby's** own exaggerated anatomy — yet different.

Just as Jack absorbed (and improved) tricks of the trade from all kinds of artistic influences and made them his own, there are traces of artistic influences from **Eisner** to **Miller** in **McFarlane's** work — but Todd has transcended imitation to put his own unique stamp on superhero storytelling.

For instance, it doesn't matter whether his Spider-Man is anatomically "correct" — he's *spidery,* and that's what's important. The essence of the characters always comes through, and thankfully in artful, imaginative but not incomprehensible layouts.

Now, *that's* comics.

-DAVID

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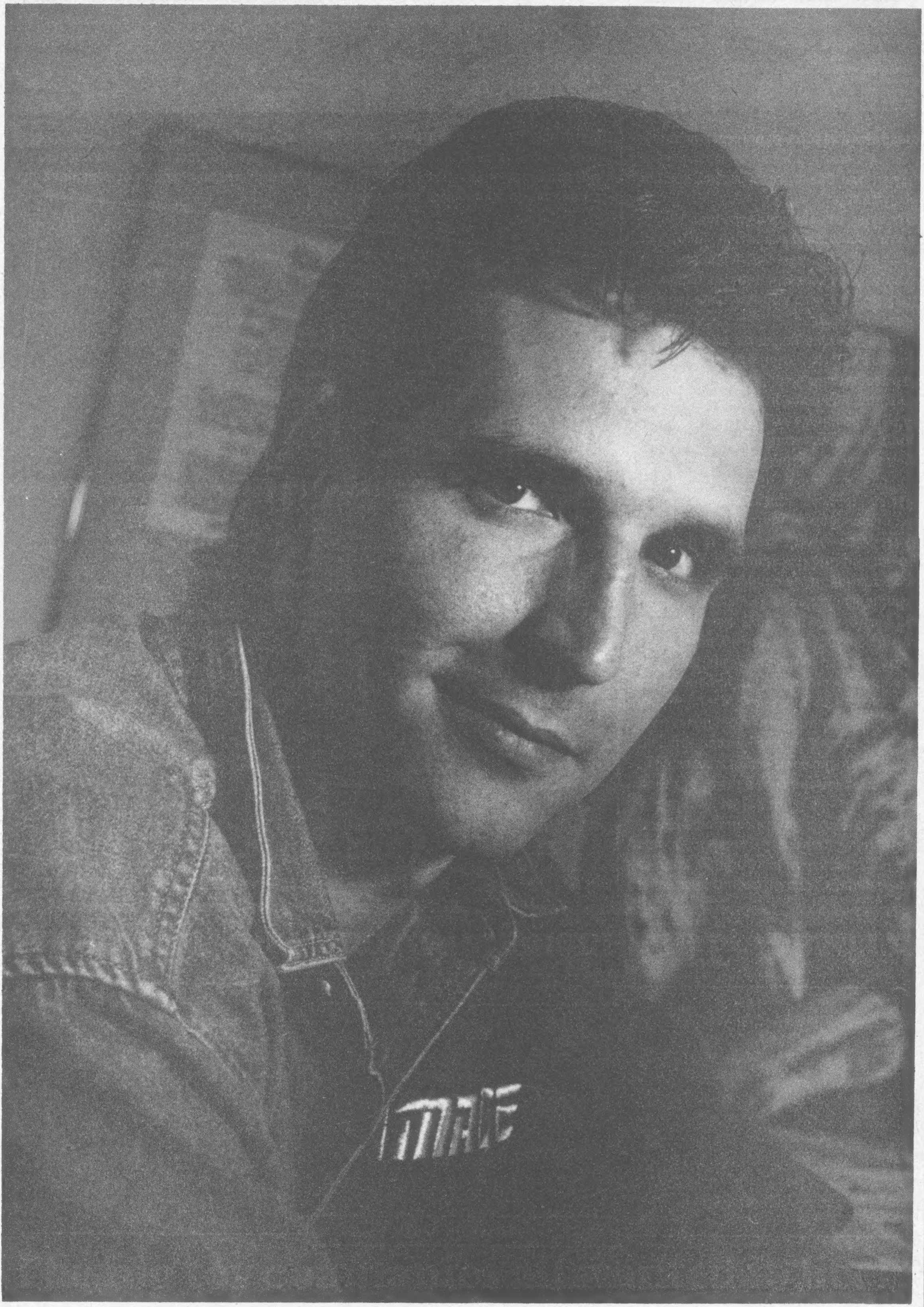

Spawn, but Todd wanted creative control."

Real Name: Todd McFarlane

First Professional Appearance: 1985 - "Coyote" published by Marvel/Epic Comics.

Occupation: Comic Book Artist/Writer/Publisher, Toymaker and Spawn Deal Maker

Height: 5'11" **Eyes:** Brown **Weight:** 165 lbs. **Hair:** Brown

Place of Birth: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Unusual Features: A quick witted crusader for artists' rights. Successfully publishes own work and creates toys independent of the industry giants. Dubbed "Most Important Person in Comics", McFarlane has a fondness for baseball caps and loves sports (he once tried out for the Toronto Blue Jays).

Group Affiliation: Co-Founder of Image Comics, President and CEO of Todd McFarlane Productions and Todd Toys

Base of Operations: Spawn Central – Phoenix, Arizona

Marital Status: Married to Wanda Kolomyjec and has two daughters Cyan and Kate.

Origin: After reading his first comic book at age 17, McFarlane studied art and painting at Eastern Washington University. Upon graduation, he began mailing sample illustrations to New York comic book companies until he was hired by Marvel/Epic Comics to pencil "Coyote." He then began a two year stint at DC Comics working on "Infinity, Inc." before moving to Marvel in 1987. While there he penciled several books including "The Incredible Hulk", "Detective" and "Batman". McFarlane became a major creative force when he began illustrating the "Amazing Spider-Man". This led to the super hot "Spider-Man", which with McFarlane's writing and artistic talents, propelled the webslinger to new heights. However McFarlane was not satisfied. In 1992, he left Marvel and formed Todd McFarlane Productions so he could devote more time to his family. Seeking a bigger challenge for artistic freedom, he and five other artists founded Image Comics, now a major player in the industry. One of Image's first offering was "Spawn" which broke records, selling over 1.7 million copies for an independently produced book and establishing it as the #1 best selling comic book. McFarlane's creation spawned new endeavors - Todd Toys, which creates the line of Ultra-Action Figures based on the popular comic books "Spawn", "WetWorks" and "Youngblood"; new video and CD-ROM games from Sony Imagesoft; a "Spawn" board game from Pressman and new comic books, including the one shot "Spawn/Batman" and "Violator" and "Angela" mini-series.

Powers: Unlike Spawn, McFarlane possesses no superhuman abilities or strengths. He can bench press a maximum of 200 pounds and despite complaints from his wife, squeezes the toothpaste tube in the middle.

Weapons: Sharpie black marker, drawing pad and other drawing implements.

Future Plans: To bring Spawn to television and the silver screen.

"We really wanted to make cool toys."

TODD TOYS

They said he couldn't do it. Then they said he couldn't do it again. He proved them wrong. Striking yet another blow for creators everywhere, that inventive bad boy of comicdom, Todd McFarlane, has done it yet again, parlaying his hit series SPAWN into the latest sensation of the action figure realm, with impressive sell-outs and several important awards going to the inaugural Spawn Ultra-Action Figure line of 1994. And more of his Image affiliates are heading into this arena, excited yet again by the creator control prospects the hit-maker has managed to make into reality. For a closer look at Todd's latest success . . .

DARREL L. BOATZ: *I'm speaking with Bill Martin at Stabur. Just to start out, let's get the Bill Martin "What I Did In My Lifetime" school report.*

BILL MARTIN: Well, to set the record straight as far as the company name, the company name is Todd Toys. The relationship with Stabur is kind of like a partnership. The owner of Stabur is a partner with **Todd McFarlane** in the Todd Toys venture.

VITAL STATISTICS

Spawn Line: Fall 1994
Figures: Clown, Medieval Spawn, Overtkill, Spawn, Tremor, Violator
Accessories: Spawn Alley (play set), Spawn Mobile, Violator Monster Rig
Spawn Line: Spring 1995
Figures: Angela, Badrock, Chapel, Commando Spawn, Malebolgia, Pilot Spawn
Spawn Line: Fall 1995
Figures: Cosmic Angela, Curse, Future Spawn, Ninja Spawn, Spawn II, Vaporizer, Violator II, Xeq-Tor
Accessories: Spawn Air Cycle, Violator Chopper
WetWorks Line: Fall 1995
Figures: Dane, Dozer, Grail, Mother-1, Vampire, Werewolf
Youngblood Line: Fall 1995
Figures: Crypt, Die-Hard, Dutch, Sentinel, Shaft, Troll

DARREL: *Okay.*

BILL: Just to clarify that. Myself, I was born in Pomona, California. My father was in the navy and that's where my mother was living at the time, while he was stationed out there. We moved to Flint, Michigan, so I grew up in Flint, which is an automotive town. And from there went to college in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at Western Michigan University, where my background is printing management. I worked in the printing trade here in Detroit for 17 years, and through that is how I met **Paul Burke,** who is the partner with **Todd McFarlane** in Todd Toys. I worked with Paul for about a year and a half at Stabur before the Todd Toys venture took off.

DARREL: *I'm not really very familiar with the toy market, but it seems to me that Todd Toys is kind of a unique or rare type of situation. Mostly don't licensors just license and sit back?*

BILL: That's *normally* the case. Todd had spoken with the big toy companies,

Todd Toys, SPAWN and all related characters ®&©1995 Todd McFarlane.

"Todd's in day to day contact, has constant input."

NEW LOOK • NEW DIRECTION • NEW COSTUME •

Mattel and Kenner and Hasbro, and they all wanted to license Spawn and make Spawn action figures. But one of the things that was *key* in all of the negotiations was that Todd wanted to have some creative control over the toy-making process. None of those companies were willing to relinquish that responsibility. And after some discussion that Todd had had with Paul, they decided, "Hey, we can make some toys on our own." Paul being an entrepreneur, pretty much if an idea comes up and he thinks that it's feasible to make some money on it, we'd go ahead and do it. So, we figured we could probably make some toys of our own, started off in that avenue, and Todd created his own toy company.

DARREL: *Let's see . . . I was born in '58, you sound like you may be around my age.*

BILL: I was born in '54.

DARREL: I remember when I was growing up basically we didn't have much in the way of action figures, there was G.I. Joe and some similar stuff —

BILL: Well, really, all we had were the molded army guys. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *Yeah.*

BILL: They were already pre-posed, we stuck them in the ground and threw little firebombs at them!

DARREL: *Yeah, and that was lots of fun!*

BILL: Yeah, it was.

DARREL: *When I looked around at these Spawn toys, these kind of blew me away. They seem a lot more . . . more exact. Even the quality, they're going to hold up a little bit better to the firebombs.*

BILL: *(Laughter.)* They won't melt as easy, yeah. Well, one of the things when we started was that we really wanted to make cool toys. And everybody kind of looked back to their childhoods, at the toys they'd had, and thought about what did it do that they liked, you know, and what would they have liked it to do. That went into a lot of the design work of the toys. Most of them have the pretty basic functions, but it's more the decoration. If you look at them, there's a lot more detail. There's a lot more time spent in decorating the figures. Buckles are actually

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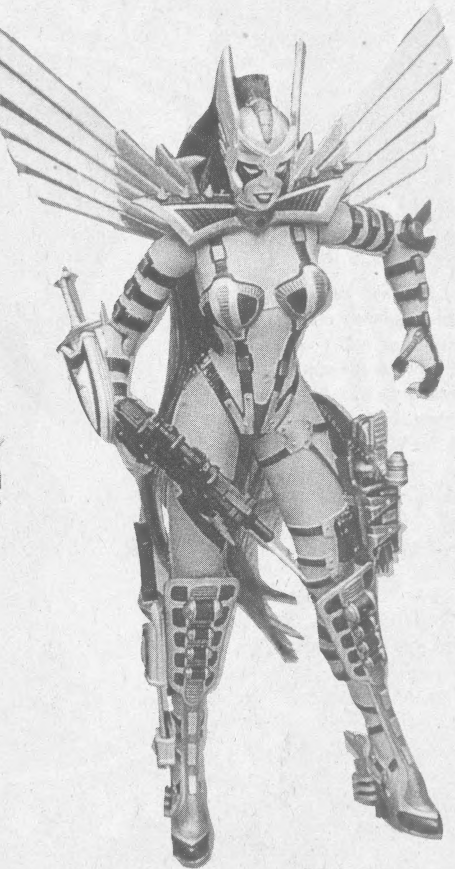
“Spawn without his ck, his head is mangled, face

NINJA SPAWN.



COSMIC ANGELA.

painted as opposed to just molded in plastic and stuck out there, you know.

DARREL: *It's a richer experience, I guess.*

BILL: Right, yeah. And some of the figures, they are big figures made out of a *lot* of plastic. You pick it up and you know you've got a toy in your hand.

DARREL: *Oh, yeah.*

BILL: You don't have a hollow piece of plastic. You've got Overtkill, who's a pretty large figure from the first line of toys that we did, who is a pretty awesome figure in the comic, you pick up that toy and you *know* you've got a pretty awesome figure in your hand. I think that kind of relates.

DARREL: *Yeah, yeah. I read in one article that Todd had designed all these toys himself, but from something else I read it sounded like there were other designers.*

BILL: We have a design company in New Jersey that works for us exclusively. What they do is they work with Todd, going back and forth with control drawings on the figures. Todd will draw up a figure, they'll take it and put it into the control drawing form, and they'll go back and forth. Todd will look at it, make changes, it comes back and they'll make changes. Then from there they send *those* drawings out to the sculptors to have them sculpt the models. So Todd's in day to day contact with these guys, has constant input as to what he wants to see in the toys. It's not that he's actually drawing *every* figure, but he has a lot of input on a regular basis as to what he wants.

DARREL: *And, of course, he designed the characters to begin with.*

BILL: That's it, yeah; they come from his comic book characters.

DARREL: *The line premiered in the fall of '94, last year —*

BILL: That's right.

DARREL: *From what I understand, sales have been pretty fabulous.*

BILL: Yes.

DARREL: *In looking around at action figures here I've noticed that the Spawn figures are pretty much larger than most of the action figures, but there aren't a lot of accoutrements with any of these, that I've been able to find.*

BILL: You mean accessories?

DARREL: *Accessories, yeah. Is that going to change?*

BILL: You mean as far as the figures having weapons and so on?

DARREL: *Yeah.*

BILL: In the first series, the toys that we released in the fall of '94, they didn't really have a lot of weapons. One of the things, in how quickly this company was put together, how quickly we were able to put toys to market, the conversation between Todd and Paul to *start* the company was in November of 1993. By February of '94 at Toy Fair we had six figures that were drawn, two or three of them were already sculpted and ready to go, and a

kind of sewn together. He's called Hamburger Head."

vehicle, a model of a vehicle. So, in a period of about three months we put together what toys we planned to ship out for the fall of '94. Production had to *start* on those figures in May to get toys out in time for the Christmas season, so in a very *short* period of time we were able to accomplish a lot. So, the first figures didn't have a lot of those accessories only for the mere fact that just to get the figures out was a major accomplishment. So, that's *part* of the reason why they first line of toys didn't have as much in the line of accessories, because we were concentrating more on getting really cool figures out. And we knew as the company grew we would be able to add the extras as it went along. Now, if you look at the spring figures, each figure has quite a few accessories.

DARREL: *The only one of those I've been able to find is Chapel.*

BILL: Chapel has a sword, a machine gun — granted, they're not loaded down with accessories, but I think half the time the kids lose those anyhow. *(Laughter.)* I know we get a lot of letters asking for them to be replaced.

DARREL: *Yeah, I remember from when I was a kid, you're forever losing the weapons and making do with sticks and stuff.*

BILL: That's right, that's right.

DARREL: *The success of the line so far, how much of that is attributable to the popularity of SPAWN, and how much of that would be attributable to the toys themselves being . . . well, a different variety than the other action figures that are out there?*

XEQ-TOR.

BILL: I think a *lot* of it has to do with the popularity of SPAWN. SPAWN being one of the top-selling comic books month after month, if it's not #1 it's usually within the top three or four, so that's quite a following, a lot of exposure. So, I think that has helped a lot. But also, I think a contributing factor is the fact that they really *are* cool looking toys. I think when kids go into the toy stores and look at these compared to what else is out there, I think the choice is made for them. Even if they don't know what Spawn is, they look at the toy and go, "That's a pretty cool looking toy." Let's face it, if they're going to go out and buy toys from the movies like THE SHADOW, THE FLINTSTONES, some of these hokey toys that are out there, why bother? *(Laughter.)* Why spend your money on that when you can have this really cool-looking toy. "I don't know what Spawn is but that's pretty cool, I like that." And the first toys were packed with comics so they find *out* who Spawn really is.

DARREL: *My daughter is four years old and my son is one, so my daughter right now is into LION KING pretty big.*

BILL: Oh, yeah.

DARREL: *And, yeah, there is a market for the younger kids for the smaller type toys, of course. But she looks at some of this other stuff, you can see it in here eyes, like, "Wow, that is so neat!"* (Laughter.) *But, of course, with the one-year-old I have to be a little bit careful what I allow in the house.*

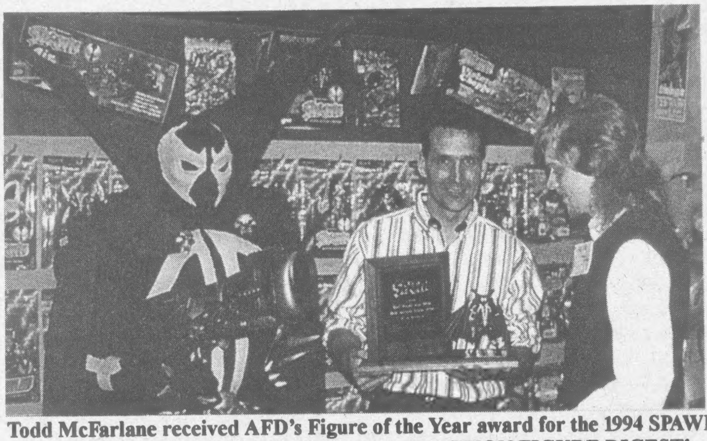
BILL: Yeah. Everything he picks up wants to go into his mouth.

DARREL: *Oh, definitely.* (Laughter.) *One thing I've not seen is the Spawn Alley play set. Now, how big is this thing?*

BILL: In size?

DARREL: *Yeah.*

BILL: Well —



Todd McFarlane received AFD's Figure of the Year award for the 1994 SPAWN line. Left to right: Spawn, Todd McFarlane, ACTION FIGURE DIGEST's editor, T.N. Tumbusch.

“Some of these changes were designed just be-

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DARREL: *Well, how big is it in any terms you want to describe it?*

BILL: Well, in sales it's been kind of a disappointment.

DARREL: *It looks neat in the pictures I've seen.*

BILL: It really is. It's probably one of the *nicest* play sets that I've ever seen. When my kids were small the popular toy was Masters of the Universe, and they had a thing called Castle Greyskull — and I bought them the Batman stuff — and to compare Spawn Alley to that, I think Spawn Alley is by far a much better toy. It's really neatly decorated and it's got a lot of cool functions to it. I think what hurts it is a lot of the sales that we experienced were from the collector base. They buy figures, they don't buy toys, you know. SPAWN has a big following of collectors in comics. But as far as the actual kid toy buyers, they may buy the figures but accessories just don't sell that much right now.

DARREL: *Yeah, but how many of these collectors, you know, are actually getting out the toys once in awhile?*

BILL: They don't.

DARREL: *They don't?*

BILL: They don't play with them at all, they don't even take them out of the package.

DARREL: *Really? I would.*

BILL: The collector would buy two, one to keep and one to take out. But the *true* collectors, they *don't* take them out of the package. They're fanatics. *(Laughter.)* We've had letters from collectors who've wanted to send their toys in to us to have them replaced because the packaging may have a little crimp in it.

DARREL: *Oh, my.*

BILL: Yeah. It's amazing just how much they want to have a perfect toy, or a perfect *sample.* So they buy them and they stow them away.

DARREL: *Well, you know, I'm a bit of a collector myself, of comics, but I've never understood taking it to that extreme, not even taking it out of the package and looking at the back and stuff.*

BILL: Yeah, you want to take it out and look at it, examine it and hold it.

DARREL: *I would. Let's see, the first line was just the six figures and the play set . . . were there a couple of vehicles?*

BILL: There were two vehicles, the Spawn Mobile and the Violator Monster Rig, a dump truck type vehicle with a cage made out of bones and whatnot.

DARREL: *Oh, one thing about Spawn Alley, just from the pictures I've seen, it does seem like you can do a lot more with this. A lot of the play sets that are out there that I've looked at, especially having a four-year-old, it's like what can you do with them besides stick the figures in them and maybe crank the elevator up and down?*

BILL: Right, right. There's a garage door that opens, there are some gates that open, a missile that shoots, and . . . I'm trying to think of what else Spawn Alley has. We've got a crane. There's a manhole cover that flips. There's a lot of things.

DARREL: *I didn't even get all that out of just the pictures.* (Laughter.) *I understand with the spring line there were another six figures —*

BILL: Right.

DARREL: *And a couple more vehicles?*

BILL: Actually, we postponed the vehicles until the new fall line. We got a late

cause we weren't happy with the original figures.”

shipment on the first vehicles, so we decided to wait until the fall of this year to release our next set of vehicles.

DARREL: *I had read where there was some problem with one of the ships bringing over the toys.*

BILL: We had one of the shipments, it left right around the first part of December and then there was an engine fire on the ship, they had to go out and evacuate the crew. The ship was stranded for two days until they could finally get towboats out there to tow it in. And there were, I think, like 50 mile an hour winds, 20 foot waves, so it was pretty bad. And as a result we lost . . . I think we ended up losing three containers overboard, and also there were seven containers that had a considerable amount of water damage. It was actually one of the last shipments of our fall stuff, but *in* that we had *redecorated* figures that we had done. Spawn, in the comic book you see him without his mask at times, his head is all mangled up, his face is kind of sewn together; he's called Hamburger Head. *(Laughter.)* That shipment had a number of Hamburger Heads in there.

DARREL: *And you do have another line gearing up for the fall?*

BILL: Right now we're in production for the fall series.

DARREL: *And that includes those two vehicles.*

BILL: Right. What we've got for the fall, seven figures for the Spawn line, and we've also signed on two other artists from the Image crew of artists. One of them is **Rob Liefeld**; his line is called Youngblood and we've got six figures we're doing of Youngblood. And then the other artist is **Whilce Portacio**, his figures are WetWorks, there are six figures that we're doing for him.

DARREL: *These look pretty neat, the Youngblood and WetWorks figures, from the pictures.*

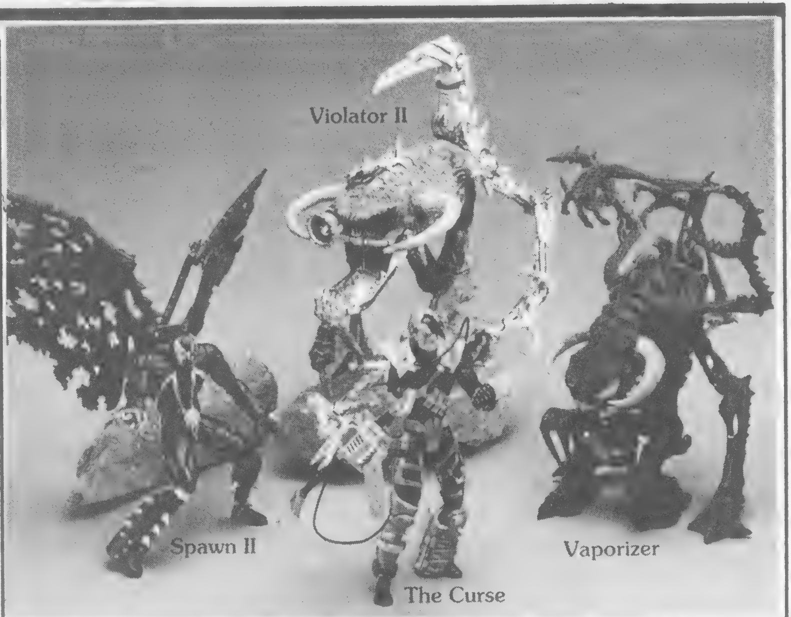
BILL: Yes.

DARREL: *Are these going to be the same Ultra-Action size and type figures as Spawn?*

BILL: Yes.

DARREL: *Great! How do you bring all of these things to life? I mean —*

BILL: Well, actually, it's all the *artists* who bring them to life. They're the ones who create the ideas. From there, they send their ideas to our designers and the designers start the process, you know, with control drawings. Then from there they do sculpts. And everything goes back to the artists for their input as to what they'd like to see changed. It's a pretty cooperative effort on everyone's part to get the figures to life.



A major expansion of the SPAWN Ultra-Action Figures line is planned for 1995. In addition, new figures for WETWORKS and YOUNGBLOOD were shown at Toy Fair.

DARREL: *What I was referring to is a lot of these look like they popped straight out of the comic books themselves. You know, I've always noticed in figures taken off comic books or cartoons or whatever, most often it seems like the dimensions are off, a little bit here and a little bit there. These Ultra-Action Figures don't seem "off" to me.*

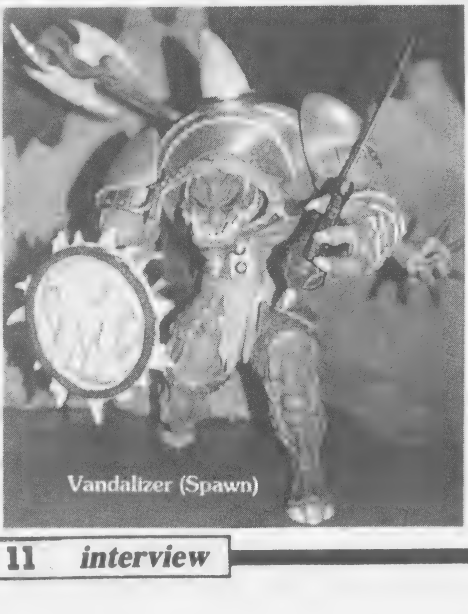
BILL: We pay a lot of attention to detail. One of the things that Todd wanted when we started the company was a quality product, and that's one of the things that we strive to do in every step of the process, from the design stage even through manufacturing. We're *constantly* battling with these factories just to let them know that we don't want just your average toys. Anybody can do that. We want good quality toys and a lot of detail.

DARREL: *That's great. Now, there's going to be a costume change very soon for Spawn himself, and this would have been unthinkable for a merchandised character 10 or 15 years ago, this radical a change in appearance. Yet you guys are coming out with a new Spawn figure.*

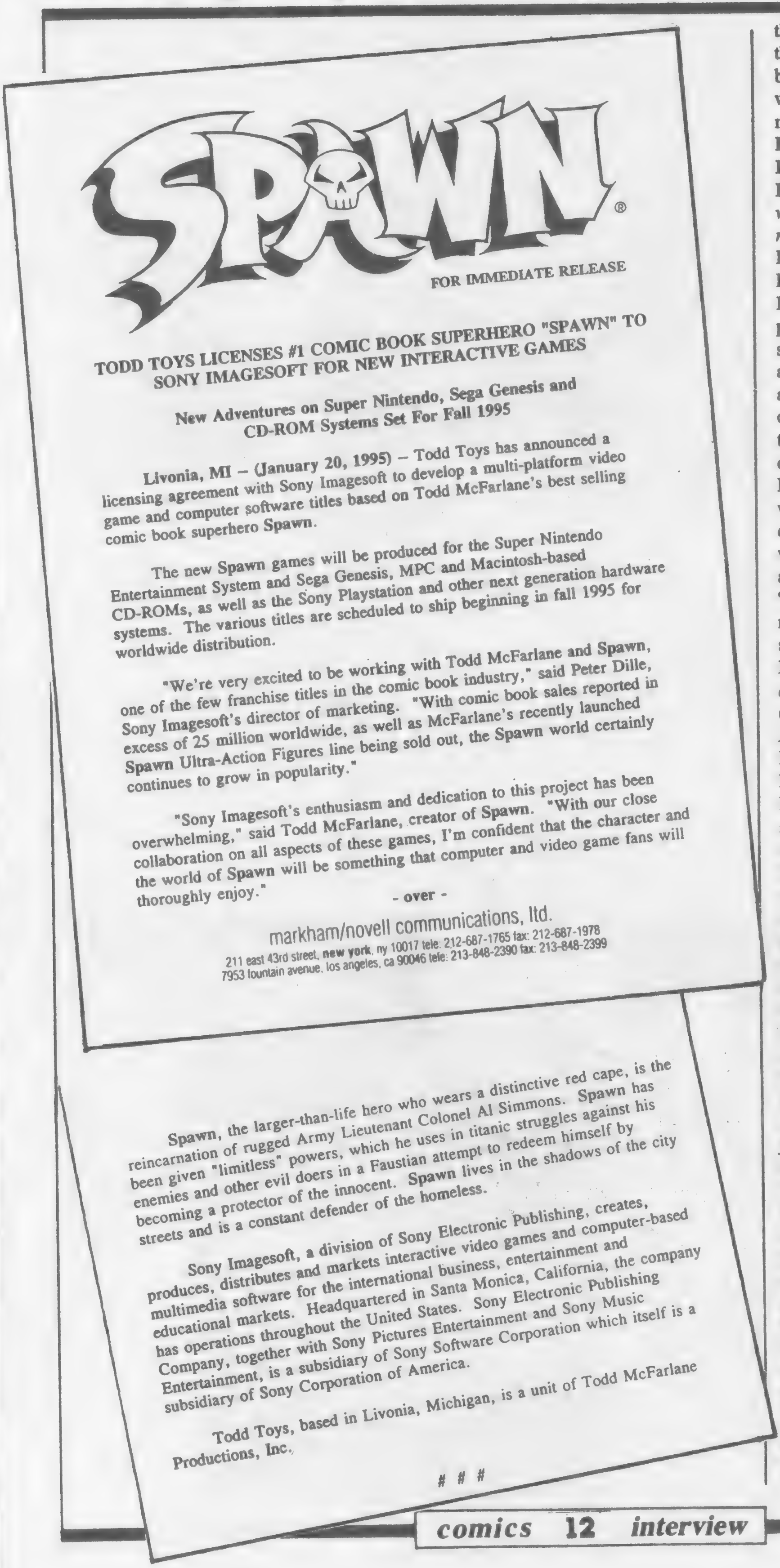
BILL: That's right.

DARREL: *I haven't actually seen this new costume except in these pictures, and I have to wonder how this holds together, this cape thing?*

BILL: The wings? Well, there's an attachment on the back that holds the wing mechanism, or the cape mechanism, onto



“We’re a pretty small company. We don’t have large



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New Adventures on Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis and CD-ROM Systems Set For Fall 1995

Livonia, MI -- (January 20, 1995) -- Todd Toys has announced a licensing agreement with Sony Imagesoft to develop a multi-platform video game and computer software titles based on Todd McFarlane's best selling comic book superhero Spawn.

The new Spawn games will be produced for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Genesis, MPC and Macintosh-based CD-ROMs, as well as the Sony Playstation and other next generation hardware systems. The various titles are scheduled to ship beginning in fall 1995 for worldwide distribution.

"We're very excited to be working with Todd McFarlane and Spawn, one of the few franchise titles in the comic book industry," said Peter Dille, Sony Imagesoft's director of marketing. "With comic book sales reported in excess of 25 million worldwide, as well as McFarlane's recently launched Spawn Ultra-Action Figures line being sold out, the Spawn world certainly continues to grow in popularity."

"Sony Imagesoft's enthusiasm and dedication to this project has been overwhelming," said Todd McFarlane, creator of Spawn. "With our close collaboration on all aspects of these games, I'm confident that the character and the world of Spawn will be something that computer and video game fans will thoroughly enjoy."

- over -

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Spawn, the larger-than-life hero who wears a distinctive red cape, is the reincarnation of rugged Army Lieutenant Colonel Al Simmons. Spawn has been given "limitless" powers, which he uses in titanic struggles against his enemies and other evil doers in a Faustian attempt to redeem himself by becoming a protector of the innocent. Spawn lives in the shadows of the city streets and is a constant defender of the homeless.

Sony Imagesoft, a division of Sony Electronic Publishing, creates, produces, distributes and markets interactive video games and computer-based multimedia software for the international business, entertainment and educational markets. Headquartered in Santa Monica, California, the company has operations throughout the United States. Sony Electronic Publishing Company, together with Sony Pictures Entertainment and Sony Music Entertainment, is a subsidiary of Sony Software Corporation which itself is a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America.

Todd Toys, based in Livonia, Michigan, is a unit of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc.

# # #

the back. And then there’s a way to make the wings function, like two little levers back there that you can push and the wings actually have some kind of flapping motion.

DARREL: *Wow.*

BILL: It’s really a cool figure.

DARREL: *The other one that looks — well, they all look neat — but the one that really caught my eye is Future Spawn.*

BILL: Yeah! *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *My God!*

BILL: Oh, yeah. You know, part of the problem that we have is our company is in so many different locations, the designers are in New Jersey and Todd’s in Arizona and we’re in Michigan. Just to communicate between those three offices to stay on top of what’s going on all the time becomes rather difficult. The first time I saw Future Spawn, we had a meeting here where Todd was in town and one of the designers was in town. He brought that with him. He pulled it out and I look at it and said, *“What is that!”* And he goes, “Oh, that’s Future Spawn.” It just knocked me out. That was the first time that I had seen it. This is really a cool toy.

DARREL: *Yes, it is. I mean, just looking at the picture, this gives RoboCop —* (Laughter.) *This is miles away from RoboCop.*

BILL: Oh, yeah.

DARREL: *Your sales are staying up?*

BILL: We sold out our first line of the spring production. We started production in January and we shipped through the first part of May, and we sold everything out that we made. And we’re currently doing some redecorating, we plan on going *back* to production — actually, we’re starting the production process *again* for those figures to produce some more. But, yeah, we were pretty pleased that we were able to sell out; we surpassed our expectations for what we thought we would do in the spring.

DARREL: *Mentioning going back and redesigning, a number of the figures from the original line, you went back and did them in different colors.*

BILL: Yes.

DARREL: *What was the thinking behind that?*

BILL: Well, part of it . . . Some of them were changes that Todd had wanted to see all along. He never was really happy, in the original line, with a couple of the figures. These were changes that he wanted to see. And we’d *always* wanted to put Spawn out with the Hamburger Head. Some of these changes were designed just because we knew we weren’t happy with the original figures. And then we also wanted to see what the toys would look overhead. That money, we put into toy design."

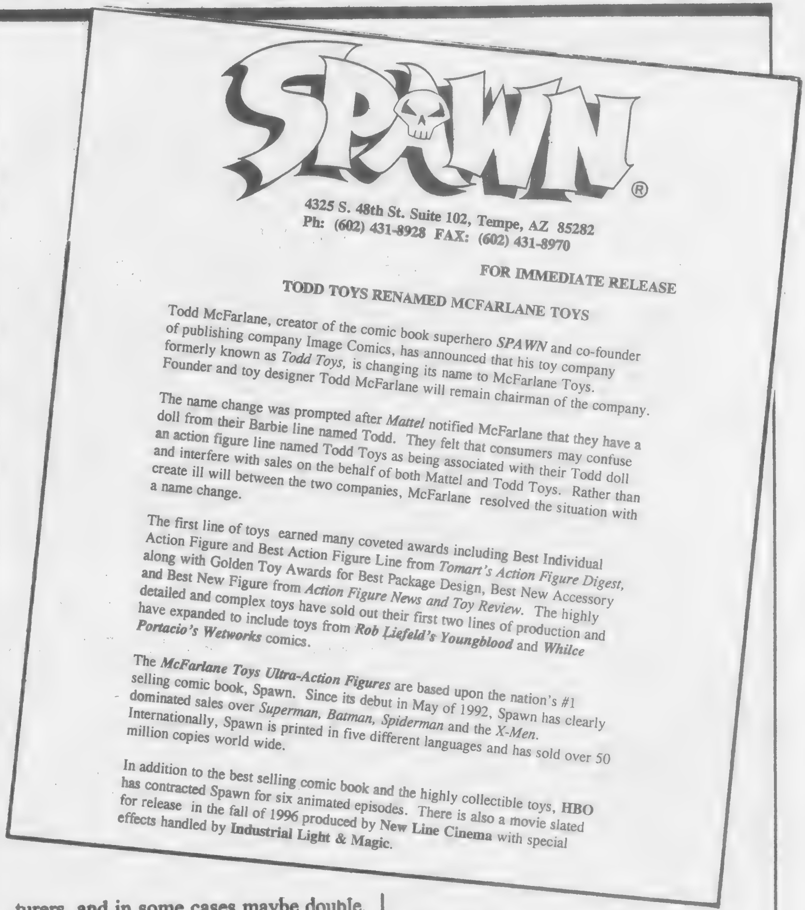
like painted a little differently, and what the response would be. And they seem to really *like* variations. I was talking to one of the guys from the collector magazines, because in the spring line we had a number of variations as a result of trying to get just to the point where we wanted to be; each week the factory would ship and we would look at samples, but it was like, *No, this isn't right, we've got to do this.* So, there were a *lot* of variations out there. I talked to the guy from the collector magazine, he was saying, "These people *love* it, they love the *hunt!*" To them it's a challenge. If they know about the variation, it's a challenge for them to go out and find that figure.

DARREL: *That's great. As long as people are happy, that's the main thing.*

BILL: Oh, yeah. I mean, the spring line, we had a number of problems at the factory level, trying to get them to the point where we wanted them to be. Hopefully in the fall we've got plans to come in with *some* changes just because it seems to be so popular. People want to have two Spawns painted differently to be able to say that they've got them, so we'll continue to offer it.

DARREL: *I also noticed, from looking around here recently, that the prices on the Todd Toys are very competitive. I mean, you know, they weren't nearly as expensive as they look like they should be.* (Laughter.)

BILL: We pay a lot of money for our toys. We *probably* pay at least half as much again as some of the other manufacturers, and in some cases maybe double. But one of the advantages that we have is that we're a pretty small company, we run pretty lean, so we don't have the large overhead that a Mattel or something like that has. So, that money we put into the toy design.



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TODD TOYS RENAMED MCFARLANE TOYS

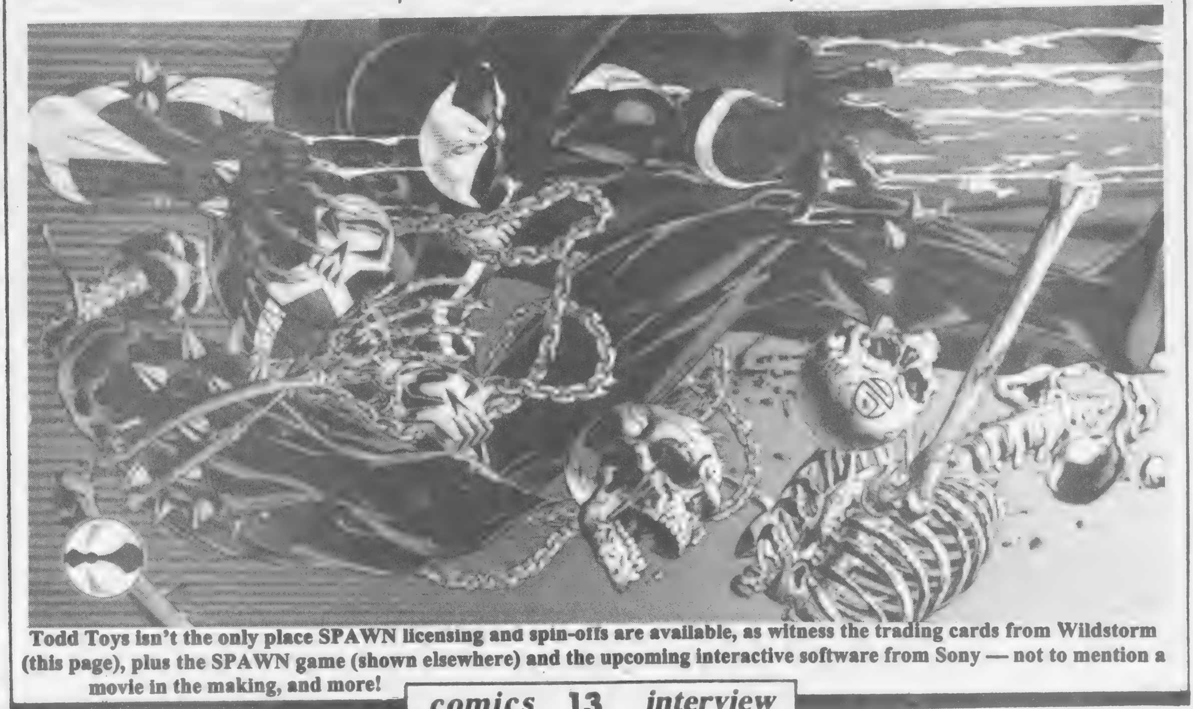
Todd McFarlane, creator of the comic book superhero *SPAWN* and co-founder of publishing company Image Comics, has announced that his toy company formerly known as *Todd Toys,* is changing its name to McFarlane Toys. Founder and toy designer Todd McFarlane will remain chairman of the company.

The name change was prompted after *Mattel* notified McFarlane that they have a doll from their Barbie line named Todd. They felt that consumers may confuse an action figure line named Todd Toys as being associated with their Todd doll and interfere with sales on the behalf of both Mattel and Todd Toys. Rather than create ill will between the two companies, McFarlane resolved the situation with a name change.

The first line of toys earned many coveted awards including Best Individual Action Figure and Best Action Figure Line from *Tomart's Action Figure Digest,* along with Golden Toy Awards for Best Package Design, Best New Accessory and Best New Figure from *Action Figure News and Toy Review.* The highly detailed and complex toys have sold out their first two lines of production and have expanded to include toys from ***Rob Liefeld's Youngblood*** and ***Whilce Portacio's Wetworks*** comics.

The ***McFarlane Toys Ultra-Action Figures*** are based upon the nation's #1 selling comic book, Spawn. Since its debut in May of 1992, Spawn has clearly dominated sales over *Superman, Batman, Spiderman* and the *X-Men.* Internationally, Spawn is printed in five different languages and has sold over 50 million copies world wide.

In addition to the best selling comic book and the highly collectible toys, **HBO** has contracted Spawn for six animated episodes. There is also a movie slated for release in the fall of 1996 produced by **New Line Cinema** with special effects handled by **Industrial Light & Magic.**



Todd Toys isn't the only place SPAWN licensing and spin-offs are available, as witness the trading cards from Wildstorm (this page), plus the SPAWN game (shown elsewhere) and the upcoming interactive software from Sony — not to mention a movie in the making, and more!

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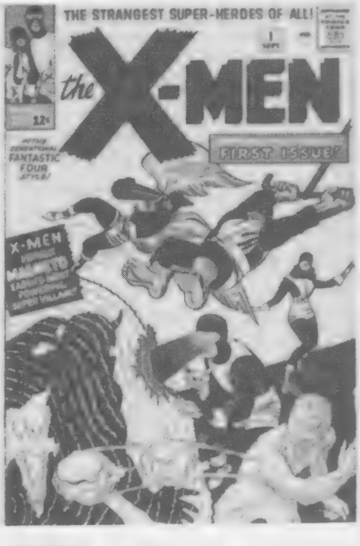
"I used to be a dealer — the largest comic-book dealer."



Mark Macaluso doesn't just know the non-sports card business; he lives it. Not only is Mark one of the largest non-sports card retailers in the country, but his Fantasy Trade Card Company has produced many memorable non-sport card sets, including MARVEL HEROES COMIC COVERS and STAR TREK II, III, and IV, among others. In addition, Mark writes a regular column about product and industry trends for THE WRAPPER, a leading non-sports card publication . . .

MARK MACALUSO

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Mark Macaluso

Year of birth: 1950

All-time favorite card set: JETS, ROCKETS, AND SPACEMEN (1951). Spectacular science-fiction artwork. Very vibrant colors, very imaginative. It's what science fiction is all about: getting you to use your imagination.

Favorite card set (self-produced): ALIEN NATION. I liked the show, and I really liked the way the card set came out. I think it had the right look and feel to match the show, and I think the quality of reproduction was the highest we had done to date.

Card Sets Produced: ROCKETSHIP X-M (1979), THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (1980), STAR TREK II (1982), STAR TREK III (1984), MARVEL HEROES COMIC COVERS (1984), THREE STOOGES I (1985), ROBOTECH MACROSS (1986), STAR TREK IV (1987), THREE STOOGES II (1989), and ALIEN NATION (1990), among others.

Favorite Comic Book Character: My favorite from when I was younger and reading comic books was Thor. I don't really have a favorite any longer. I still like Thor a lot. I like Superman.

X-MEN TM & ©1984 MCG, ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW ©1975 20th Century Fox, STAR TREK ®&©1984 Paramount Pictures, THREE STOOGES TM & ©1985 Norman Maurer/Columbia Pictures, ROCKETSHIP X-M TM & ©1979 Mossman-Williams Prods.

“I created and designed the first comic

ROBERT ROWE: *I read in one of your ads that you have 30 million cards in stock. Are those sport or non-sport?*

MARK MACALUSO: Almost exclusively non-sport. It's more like 60 million now.

ROBERT: *And how much space do they take up?*

MARK: It's an enormous amount of space. Let's just say it's three pretty good-sized warehouses full.

ROBERT: *Were the MARVEL HEROES COMIC COVERS cards the beginning of your interest in non-sport cards?*

MARK: No. I used to be a comic-book dealer, and there was a point when I was arguably the largest comic-book dealer. I was in business before Capital and Diamond. I created sub-distributors.

The comics business used to be different. When I first got in the business, there weren't two kinds of comic books: there weren't direct comics and newsstand comics. There were no comics boxes, no custom-designed plastic bags specifically for comics.

I created and designed the first comic box. I went direct manufacturing, making plastic bags for comic books. I changed the face of the whole thing. As we know it today, people like Friendly Frank's, Capital, Diamond and the other sub-distributors that have been around — I was the very first one.

ROBERT: When was this?

MARK: It was late 1970s — 1977.

ROBERT: *So, you had a store and saw a need for boxes and bags or people came in asking for this stuff?*

MARK: I started going to conventions and I was storing my comic books in Miller Beer cases, and it just became ridiculous. They were unwieldy; they weren't strong enough. A lot of people were using wine boxes. That was one of the favorites. And I just said, “This isn't good enough.”

I went to Weyerhaeuser Company, and I personally designed the box and had them make them.

ROBERT: *And this was around 1977?*

MARK: Yeah.

ROBERT: *Everybody makes them now, it seems, or do you get a royalty on them?*

MARK: Most of the styles in the marketplace right now are a rip-off of one of two styles. Most of them are styles that I designed. There's one style I didn't design that has a double bottom in it. The style that has the four thicknesses of cardboard on the long ends, which is the predominantly used one, is the one that I designed.

ROBERT: *How did this lead into your getting into non-sport cards?*

MARK: I got into cards because comic books got boring. I had owned virtually every comic book ever made, including ones that were so rare there was only one known copy, and then I would find the second known copy.

What I wanted to do was go into publishing comic books, and, at the time, it was too early because it was still several years before alternate titles came around. At the time, there was pretty much Marvel and DC, and that was *all* anybody wanted to hear about. Something that wasn't Marvel or DC just would not be successful.

And so, because I couldn't be successful at publishing at the time, I switched over to non-sport cards. I was already dealing in non-sport cards to a limited degree. We had already handled the Topps MARVEL SUPERHEROES STICKERS from 1975 and 1976, and all the STAR WARS and STAR TREK stuff from 1976 and 1977. About 20 percent of my business was already non-sport trading cards.

ROBERT: *So, was there a natural marriage between comics and non-sports cards?*

MARK: Oh, absolutely. There was probably a 35 percent crossover at the time. When I went to shows, about a third of my table space was for displaying non-sport cards, and the rest of it was for comic books.

At the time, I didn't do card shows. I just did comic shows, and I sold about one-third cards at comic shows, so there was a fairly large crossover.

ROBERT: *Was your first card set the MARVEL HEROES COMIC COVERS?*

MARK: No. My first set was ROCKETSHIP X-M in 1979.

ROBERT: The cards had photos from the movie?

MARK: And from the reproduction. The movie was resurrected by **Wade Williams** Productions, and they re-filmed the special effects scenes and the scenes that took place on Mars. It was scheduled for re-release in late 1979.

The card set was produced by us in cooperation with them for coordinated re-release, so that when they re-released the film, we would release the card set.

It turns out that they ended up making a better deal with cable, and they released the original on cable instead of the re-release, and the re-release version got shelved. But the card set has pictures from the original and the re-release.

ROBERT: *How did you come to select ROCKETSHIP X-M as the subject for a card set in the first place?*

MARK: We had been looking for a card set or to buy a license — we didn't even

Tim Curry as THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW's Frank N. Furter.

box and plastic bags for comic books."

care what license it was, as long as we could buy it cheaply — in order to produce a card set and find out what the pitfalls of producing a card set were. We wanted something, of course, that was vaguely related to what we were doing, something science-fiction or comics-related.

It turns out that **Wade Williams** had been buying up a bunch of these very early science fiction movies, so we went to him. His price to us was: if you pay for making a dupe of the movie that you can cut clips out of, we'll give you the license.

I don't think he had anybody banging down his door at the time to do this and, in order for us to do it, we'd need the clips from the movie to produce the cards themselves. So we paid for a dupe of the movie, which was $500, and he provided us with clips and we made the set. Some of them we reproduced from the original lobby cards.

The next set we did was THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW.

ROBERT: *How did that come about?*

MARK: I called them on the telephone and told them what I was interested in doing. We talked for a while, and they said, "Send us a proposal in writing. Tell us how many cards you expect to make, what the gross sales are expected to be," — they were looking for about a 10 percent royalty — "and put it all into a letter, just like any other business proposal." So I did, we negotiated a little more, and we settled on contract terms.

ROBERT: *Was there a specialized card distribution network to distribute these?*

MARK: No. I went around to shows and hawked them off to the dealers. I just went from table to table and said, "Here's a new product. Here's the price. Are you interested in any?"

At the time, there was no such thing as a non-sports show, so you had to rely on the baseball card dealers to sell your product for you. We tried to get the cards into theatres that were showing ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, but people pretty much exclusively buy from one localized theatre supply house. Usually, there is no way to supply them to the theatres unless the theatre bought them directly. A theatre supply house isn't going to buy a product to sell that only *one* theatre is going to buy. They want to buy what *every* theatre will buy.

So we advertised in nationwide publications, such as there was at the time, which was basically THE COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE and a couple other publications.

I think at one point I actually advertised them in Marvel comics in a small classified ad in the back.

McCoy's friendship for Spock is put to the ultimate test, from STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK.

ROBERT: *How did your company — instead of, say, Topps — manage to land the license for STAR TREK II?*

MARK: STAR TREK goes in cycles. Topps produced a zillion cases of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, and they got an enormous number of them back as returns, because the critics panned the movie and the movie didn't have the kind of action-packed scenes that people were looking for in movies at the time. It was not the box office success it was hoped to be, and at the same time, the card set didn't do as well as expected, either.

So, Topps was feeling a little burned by STAR TREK. When we went to Paramount to procure a license, it was several weeks after STAR TREK II had been released, and usually when Topps wants to do a product, they know months ahead of time when they're going to do it and they time it for the release of the movie. And they hadn't picked it up yet, and Paramount was still waiting for them in the hopes that they would pick it up.

I said, "I'll do *anything*. I'll do any card set I can on STAR TREK."

I gave them possible suggestions, and the one that we agreed that they would let me do would be a 5" by 7" size. They told me very specifically I could not do a standard-size card set because they had hopes of selling the license elsewhere.

So I picked up STAR TREK II, and we also did STAR TREK III and STAR TREK IV in the same fashion. But they would not let me have the license prior to the release of the film.

ROBERT: *How did the MARVEL*

Klingon landing party, from STAR TREK III trading card set.

"I got into cards because comic books got boring."

HEROES COMIC COVERS set come about?

MARK: We did the same thing with Marvel: we called them up. It took us nine months to get a contract out of Marvel. They were not enthused with us at all, even though we had had some very successful stuff with STAR TREK and ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. They pretty much just wanted big people to do their stuff.

ROBERT: *You mean like Topps or Fleer?*

MARK: Right. But I kept calling them back and asked them if they had considered my proposal.

Finally, they relented and said, "Okay, you can do a card set on covers."

Because initially I wanted to do original artwork stuff, and I sent them some samples of other card sets that had been done by other companies and said, "We'd like to do something in this vein or this vein or this vein."

And they apparently weren't that thrilled. So I said, "What if I do first-issue covers? At least then you have artwork that's already approved." And they agreed with that concept and said I could do it.

ROBERT: *When you say original artwork, were you planning to commission new art by artists who were popular then?*

MARK: Yeah. Artists to draw Iron Man and Fantastic Four and Spider-Man, and make the cards in the same way the Skybox MARVEL UNIVERSE cards came out.

ROBERT: *How well did the COMIC COVERS set go over?*

MARK: They did very well for us, as a matter of fact. They're still probably our most successful release. They sold fast; they sold furious.

We really agonized over which titles to put in the set. Even though I was a comics dealer, I had already gotten out of it heavily, so I didn't have a lot of those first issues in stock anymore. It was difficult to procure good-enough-condition copies in order to photograph and reproduce. And at the same time, I had to have a copy to read so that I could write the text; I wrote the text on all the cards, also.

ROBERT: *Are you out of card production now?*

MARK: No. In the last few years, instead of producing our own sets, we've been working in cooperation with other companies, helping them produce cards. We still have some ideas of our own, and we have not yet given up the notion that we will produce more cards.

We've worked with Sperry Marketing to produce THE CLASSIC PULPS. We worked with Imagine, Inc., and produced four or five sets with them, including DARK SHADOWS, YOU SLAY ME, FANTASY GIRLS, and a couple others. We did the packaging for those products.

When Imagine was first producing card sets, they were producing factory sets only. And they were coming up with some interesting licenses that I hated to see issued only as non-trading cards. So we offered to be co-producers with them: they would have exclusive distribution rights for the factory sets, and we would have exclusive distribution on the foil packs.

So we've produced a whole bunch of sets in the last few years. It's just that we haven't done them single-handedly.

ROBERT: *Do you foresee more customers coming into the non-sports card market?*

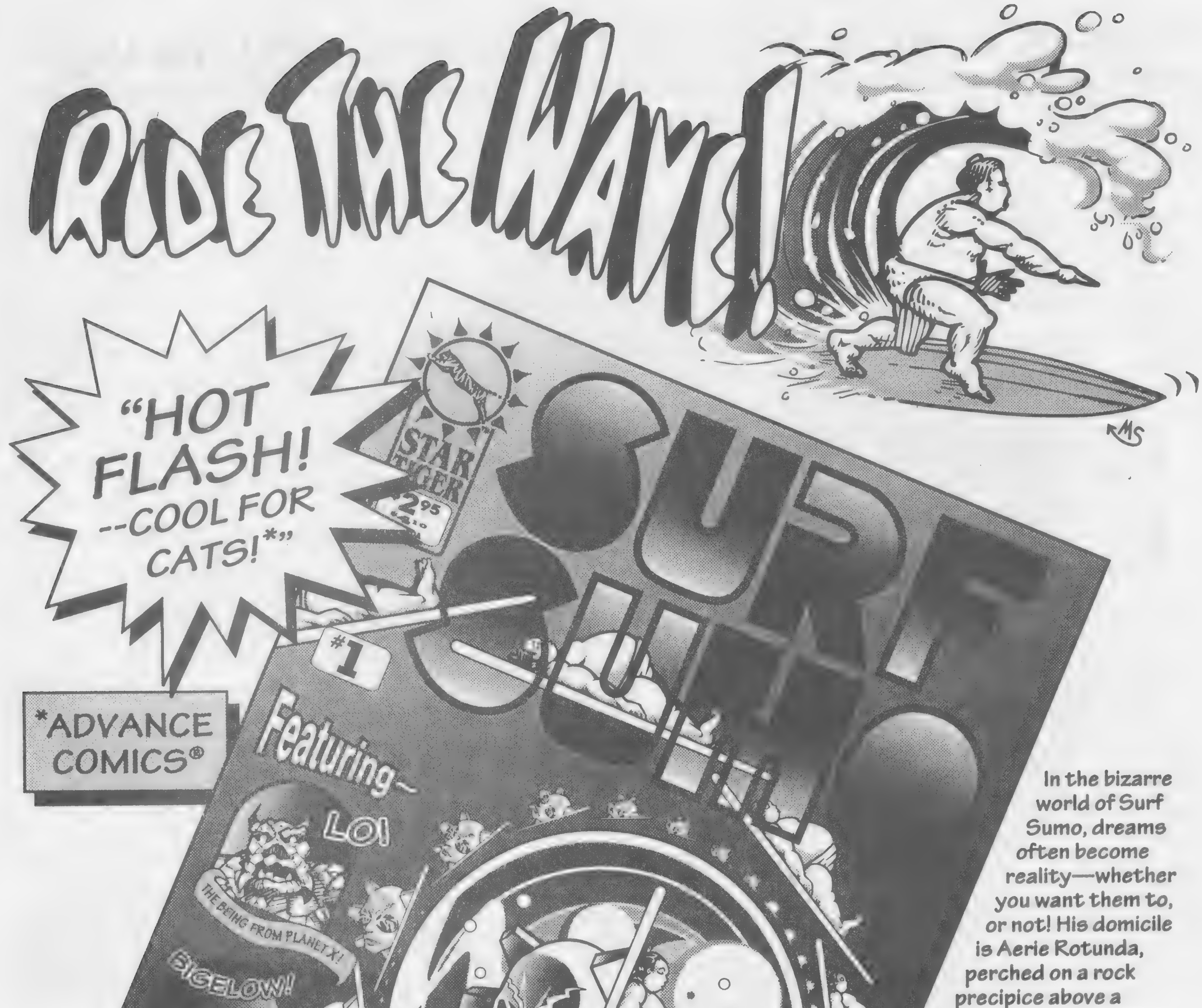
MARK: I see that as inevitable. It has to happen because there are just so many people promoting it. Every different manufacturer is promoting it, and there's a ton of different manufacturers.

And non-sport cards are far more consistent than sport cards.

ROBERT: *In terms of sales?*

MARK: Not in sales, but in viability. There's no chance that non-sport card producers are going to go on strike, like the baseball card industry. And each one of them has a unique thing to offer the marketplace, whereas in sports, as far as I'm concerned and many other people are concerned, a baseball card set is a baseball card set is a baseball card set. Yeah, there's minor differences — the quality of the reproduction, maybe some of them have slightly better card stock than the others — but, in general, how many different pictures of **Don Mattingly** do you want from the same year wearing the same uniform in the same position, holding a bat or fielding a ball? It just gets ludicrous after a while.

ROCKETSHIP X-M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READ
AN INTERVIEW WITH
MITCH SCHEELE
IN THIS ISSUE OF
COMICS INTERVIEW!

"Exactly who are you, and why should our

Scheele
1969

VITAL STATS

Full Name: Donald Mitchell Scheele (pronounced *she-lee)*
Born: October 10, 1952
Current Residence: Albany, OR
Occupation: Graphic Artist
Credits: Member of 1995 Albany West II Softball League Champions; MANTHOLOGY—THE BOOK OF MANTIDS; Thousands of t-shirt designs; a 25 ft. replica of THE YELLOW SUBMARINE. In Comics? Listed as "Jim Salicrup's Good Right Hand" in the 1976 Mighty Marvel Calendar; "Cliffwalk" story published in PROFOLIO #2, a small press anthology; and the hot new book, SURF SUMO.
Hobbies: Ratball, summer softball, agate hunting, microbrew tasting.
Things He Collects: Comic Books, Addams Family memorabilia, agates, books by or about Sir Richard Francis Burton.
Worst Stupidest Jobs Ever Done: Shingle-Stacker; Brick-Chipper; Electric Screwdriver Operator.

Lo! The Being from Planet X is © 1973 David Anthony Kraft & Mitch Scheele. Mantuscript is © 1993 Steven C. Rothermund & Mitch Scheele. All other artwork and photos in this interview are © 1995 Mitch Scheele.

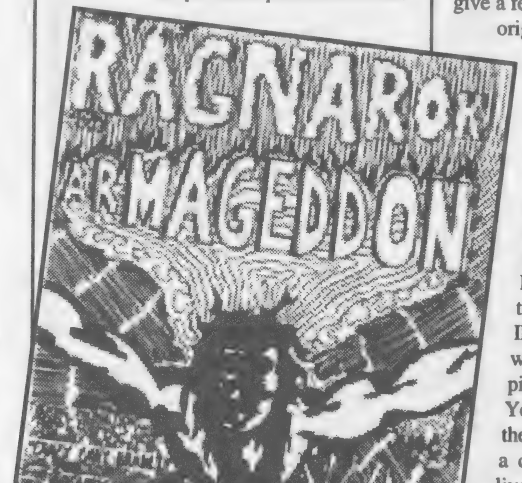
readership be interested in reading this?"

MITCH SCHEELE

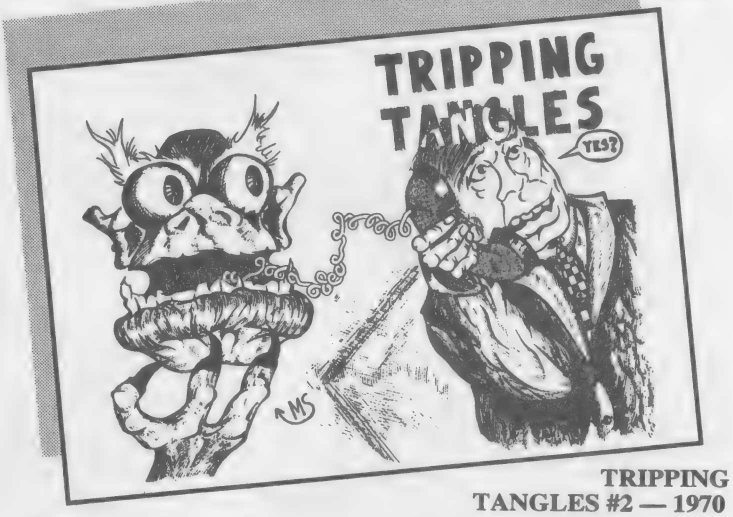
Given the opportunity of seeing my name in print for the first time in many years, even if it meant interviewing a small-time little-known "funny book" artist — someone who has been rejected time-after-time by publishers large and small for more than twenty years — well, I just had to do it... for the sake of my family. You see, most of my ancestors were farmers or fishermen, and the last time one of them made any kind of name for himself was when my great-great-grandfather Tamme Frieden Trauernicht wrote a manual on bee culture.

At first glimpse, there is little that differentiates Mitch Scheele from any other face in the crowd. Barely six feet tall, he is well-past forty, and has added ten pounds of pudge to his once stick-like frame. Fancying himself "the best right fielder in Albany", his strange concepts definitely come from that general vicinity. He lives in the middle of the Willamette valley, not far from Illahee Xing with Debby, his wife of fifteen years, and two dogs of questionable lineage..

SURF SUMO is Mitch's first book, and the barest initial clue as to the nature of his personal pocket universe.



THE RAGNAROK AND THE ARMAGEDDON — 1969



TRIPPING TANGLES #2 — 1970

HANS STEPHEN VON TRAUERNICHT: *Exactly who are you, and why should our readership be interested in reading this?*

MITCH: I don't think the readers are a bunch of quitters. If they've gotten this far, I'm sure they'll see it to the end.

HSVT: *Is it true that you claim to have started everything?*

MITCH: Well, no... but almost. I can give a few examples of things I believe I originated. I still have a leather wallet, dating from the early 70's, which was hand-crafted by a hippie-type friend, and branded with my nickname during that time; **The Prince.** Somewhere along the line I lost that nickname... was it found and re-affixed to a certain now-famous musician? In 1975 I wrote an article for the now-defunct NOSTALGIA ILLUSTRATED magazine, in which I described a giant fantasy pinball machine carnival ride. Years later, somebody built one at the Omni in Atlanta, Georgia. Is it a coincidence that I happened to live in the area; even before that...in 1974... and that some called me the **Wizard of the boathouse**, back in Lakemont Georgia...?

HSVT: *Whoa! Earth to Mitch! Could you talk about some of your early influences?*

MITCH: I liked Superman and Zorro on TV. With some blue pajamas and a red towel around my neck, I became Superboy for a day. I also had a Zorro costume, and lunch pail. I started collecting comic books in sixth grade. If I'd collected basketball cards instead, I'd have money now. The first comics I got were INCREDIBLE HULK #4, and concurrent issues of SUPERMAN, SUPERBOY, ADVENTURE, and ACTION. I remember going to see SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON for 25¢ —or a carton of milk, or something. I loved the old Tarzan movies with **Johnny Weissmuller**, and anything about dinosaurs.

HSVT: *Pretty boring stuff. When did you start thinking about being a comic book artist?*

MITCH: I guess it started back in the hallowed halls of Lebanon Union High School, when I met **Cary Bradley**. I had done a big drawing of a genie up on the blackboard, and everybody was impressed with it, except him. We were in several classes together, as well as the school Chess Club. We developed a competitive type of friendship and collaboration that produced a lot of creative stuff. He was my best friend for long time. Our first fanzine was called THE RAGNAROK AND THE ARMAGEDDON, which was printed on a ditto machine. Then, we did two issues of MIGHTY CRAZY—dimly copied on one of those early

"...are you in any way jealous of former

Jack Cordes, Vern Coriell, Phillip José Farmer, and Mitch Scheele at the Mid-America Con in 1972.

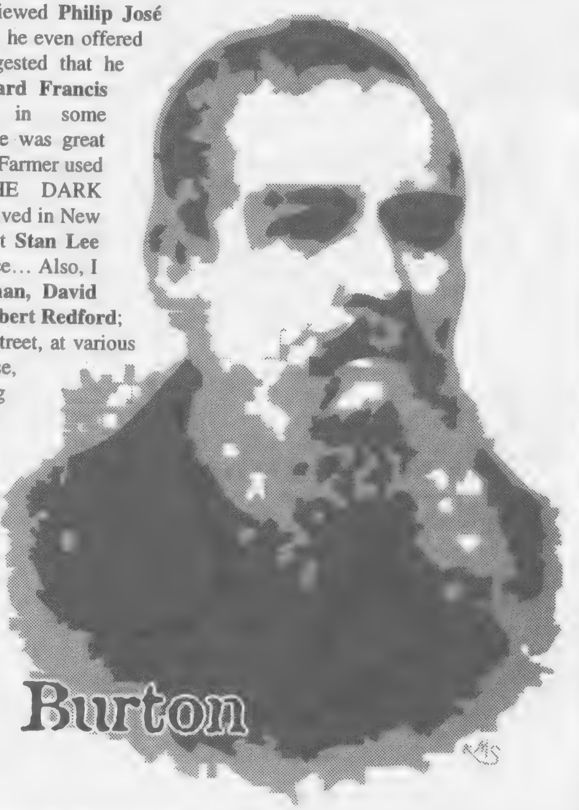
behemothian Xerox machines that Cary's Dad had at his office. **Mike Royer** was visiting his parents in Lebanon at that time, and he was nice enough to give us a demonstration of his inking skill. He inked a figure from one of Cary's stories in MIGHTY CRAZY #2. We also did two issues of "Oaf Adventures", printed in offset; called TRIPPING TANGLES. None of those early endeavors sold more than a couple-dozen copies. I still have hundreds of them sitting in my archives. Through the letter columns of various comic books, Cary and I contacted other fans in Oregon, including **Mark Verheiden, Mark Montchalin, Randy Emberlin, Chris Warner, Dale Nelson,** and **Kurt Erichsen**. Most of us attended "The First Oregon Mini-Con", which was held in Randy's basement sometime around 1970.

HSVT: *Woo. (sarcasm) Pretty impressive background. Is Verheiden the most famous person you've met?*

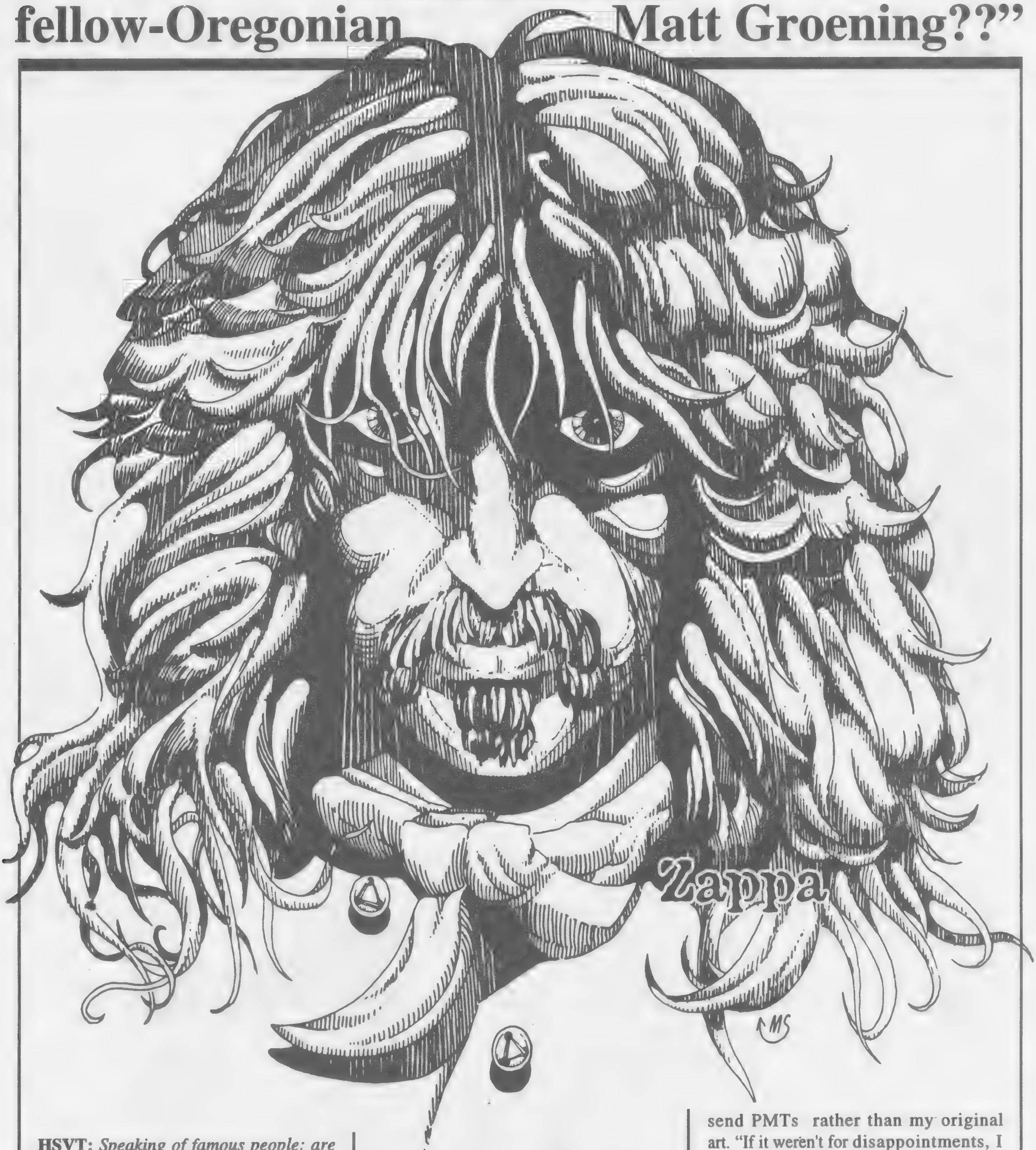
MITCH: Well, I have postcards from **Yoko Ono** and **Sean Lennon**. I had my picture taken with **Ray Bradbury**, at the San Diego Comics Convention; where I also met **Jack Kirby, Forrest J. Ackerman,** and **Tony Isabella**! **DAK** and I Interviewed **Philip José Farmer** once—and he even offered me a beer. I suggested that he should have **Richard Francis Burton** engage in some swordplay, since he was great with a blade… and Farmer used my idea in THE DARK DESIGN! When I lived in New York, I got to meet **Stan Lee** once, up in his office… Also, I saw **Dustin Hoffman, David McCallum,** and **Robert Redford**; walking down the street, at various times. And, of course, there is my long association with **David Anthony Kraft**… even got to see him buck-ass nekkid before!!

HSVT: *—Is it true what they say about… oh, never mind!*

MITCH: Fine.



fellow-Oregonian Matt Groening??"



HSVT: *Speaking of famous people; are you in any way jealous of former fellow-Oregonian Matt Groening??*

MITCH: Well, an old friend once taught me *never to admit* to anything. But, while I can't claim to even approach **Mr. Groening's** artistic talent, I certainly don't think he was hired by a relative, or anything.

HSVT: *Could you be a little more vague?*

MITCH: It's hard to confess—I should have gotten to interview **Zappa**, instead of **Groening**. And his sister got to be on TV, too!

HSVT: *Were you a big Zappa fan?*

MITCH: Yeah. I got to see him in concert, eight times. When I saw the **Alice Cooper** comic book, I offered to do one about **Zappa**... for **Jim Salicrup** when he was at Marvel. After Revolutionary Comics got around to doing one a few years ago, I offered to do a **Captain Beefheart** comic, but they declined. They almost hired me to do some other work, for $50 a page, but balked when I said I'd send PMTs rather than my original art. "If it weren't for disappointments, I wouldn't have any appointments"—that's a quote from THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS.

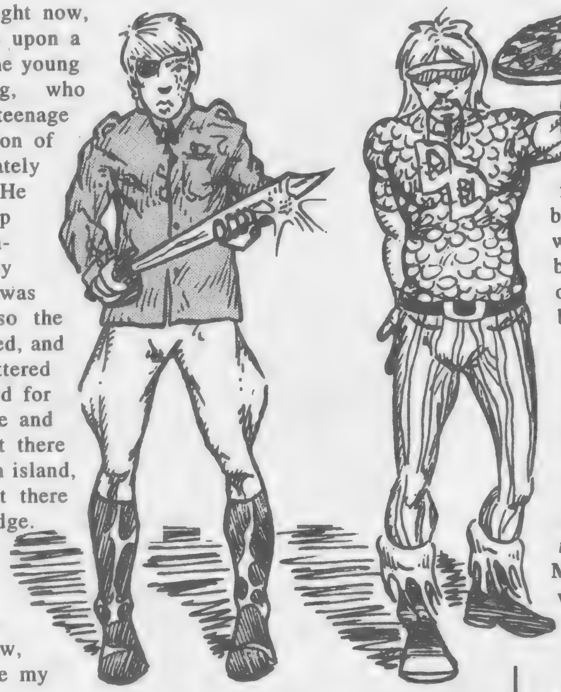
HSVT: *Oh, boo-hoo-hoo-hooo!*

MITCH: SHUT IT!!!

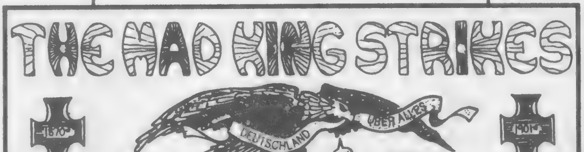
(There is a break in the conversation, as Mr. Scheele gives his interviewer a couple of good smacks; sans milk or a bowl.)

HSVT: *OUCH! OOF! Er... I mean... these are really a nice little snack! —Are they low in fat?? But seriously; why haven't you gotten into comics before now?*

“Once upon a time there was a handsome



Emperor von Scheele & Davidus Antonio Kraftus as they appeared in the pages of DIE MUNICH ZEITUNGSENTE.



THE MAD KING STRIKES

1870

1901

DEUTSCHLAND ÜBER ALLES

SPECIAL BOGUS ADVERTISEMENT ISSUE!

EDITOR- HANS STEPHEN VON TRAUERNICHT

Die Munich Zeitungsente

DEE JONZIMM

DISGUISED AS TURK PAPERBOY

LON FRINSTAD NEW LEADER OF 'SCHEELE-STAFFEL'

VON SCHEELE PROMISES: "DEATH!"

EAGLE GRABS MUSICAL MUSHROOM

THE EAGLE

MITCH: It's a long story—but since we seem to have time right now, I'll tell it to you... Once upon a time there was a handsome young artist named Wolfgang, who almost starred as the teenage Jesus in a pictorial version of the Bible, but unfortunately the deal fell through. He tried to start a rock group with a bunch of non-musicians, but everybody wanted to be **Lennon** (or was it **McCartney??**), and so the group eventually disbanded, and the various members scattered from the wind. He headed for the big city to seek fame and fortune, but when he got there he found that it was on an island, and the only way to get there was across a drawbridge. When Wolfgang placed his foot upon the bridge, it immediately raised, and he heard a booming voice from below, saying;“Who dares to use my bridge without asking permission?!”

“Sorry! My name is Wolfgang, and I wish to enter the city of fame and fortune!” Below, he could see a little red Troll, whose hand was on a lever.

“Ahh...HAR!HAR! Har-har-har!! Ye may pass—after three questions are answered! First, what career do ye seek?” asked the Troll.

“To be an artist is my goal.”

“Tch, tch... wilt thou subject thy nose to the grindstone, and keep it brown for the nonce??

“I have no fear of the grindstone, for it removes no skin from my nose, and its brown-ness will be so, from the sun only!”

The Troll snickered at this, but continued; “Be ye willing to copy the styles and techniques of those famous artists who have come before ye??”

“Why no... I want to make it on the basis of my own style and talent!”

“Then ye be a FOOL!!! ...but never mind; ye may pass! ...But be forewarned—the City will offer no successes! However, the pizza is very good.”

Wolfgang didn't believe the cruel things told him by the Troll. But, he did not want to appear ungrateful for advice grudgingly given. So, before crossing the bridge, he went below and attempted to befriend the small monster. He offered some delicious micro-brew, carried in a jar from the wild forests of his homeland. Unfortunately, upon consuming the nectar, the Troll regurgitated violently, and fell into an immediate and noisome sleep, from which he never awoke.

HSVT: **YAWN!* I'm feeling a bit drowsy myself, after that tedious parable.*

MITCH: Sleep is good. That's when you get to dream.

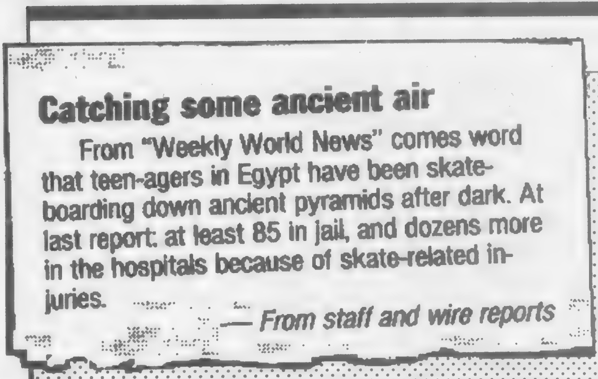
HSVT: *Duh!! ...Since this interview is supposed to be about you, why don't you tell us a little more about your incredibly egotistical self...?*

MITCH: Actually, I'd like to mention the name of the nearly famous comics and movie writer; **Mark Verheiden** once again, because he was nice enough to mention me when he was interviewed. I still have an old interview with Mark, when he was **King Verheiden**; known as the “Butcher of Millions” in that propaganda rag you worked for—DIE MANIC ZIRCONSTRUDLE or whatever.

HSVT: *That's DIE MUNICH ZEITUNGSENTE, stickboy! —and it's the best DIPLOMACY newspaper that's ever been done! We've had such famous contributors as DAK and D. Jon Zimmerman!*

MITCH: Yeah, yeah... *(spoken in a sarcastically condescending voice).* DAK (not the guy that has that electronics catalogue) and I collaborated on several projects, including the original “Lo! The Being from Planet X” story; the sequel of which appears in SURF SUMO #1.

young artist named Wolfgang. . .”



Catching some ancient air

From “Weekly World News” comes word that teen-agers in Egypt have been skateboarding down ancient pyramids after dark. At last report: at least 85 in jail, and dozens more in the hospitals because of skate-related injuries.

— From staff and wire reports

HSVT: *Whew! —Less than halfway through the interview, and my attention is already beginning to wander... Oh well, I'll attempt to spice this up a little with more biting questions.*

MITCH: You should give yourself more credit. Some of the questions you already asked **really bit**.

HSVT: *Let's talk some more about your comic.... You seem to have some kind of fixation for pyramids. What about that little “Pyramid Surfers” strip that Surf Sumo finds in his archives?*

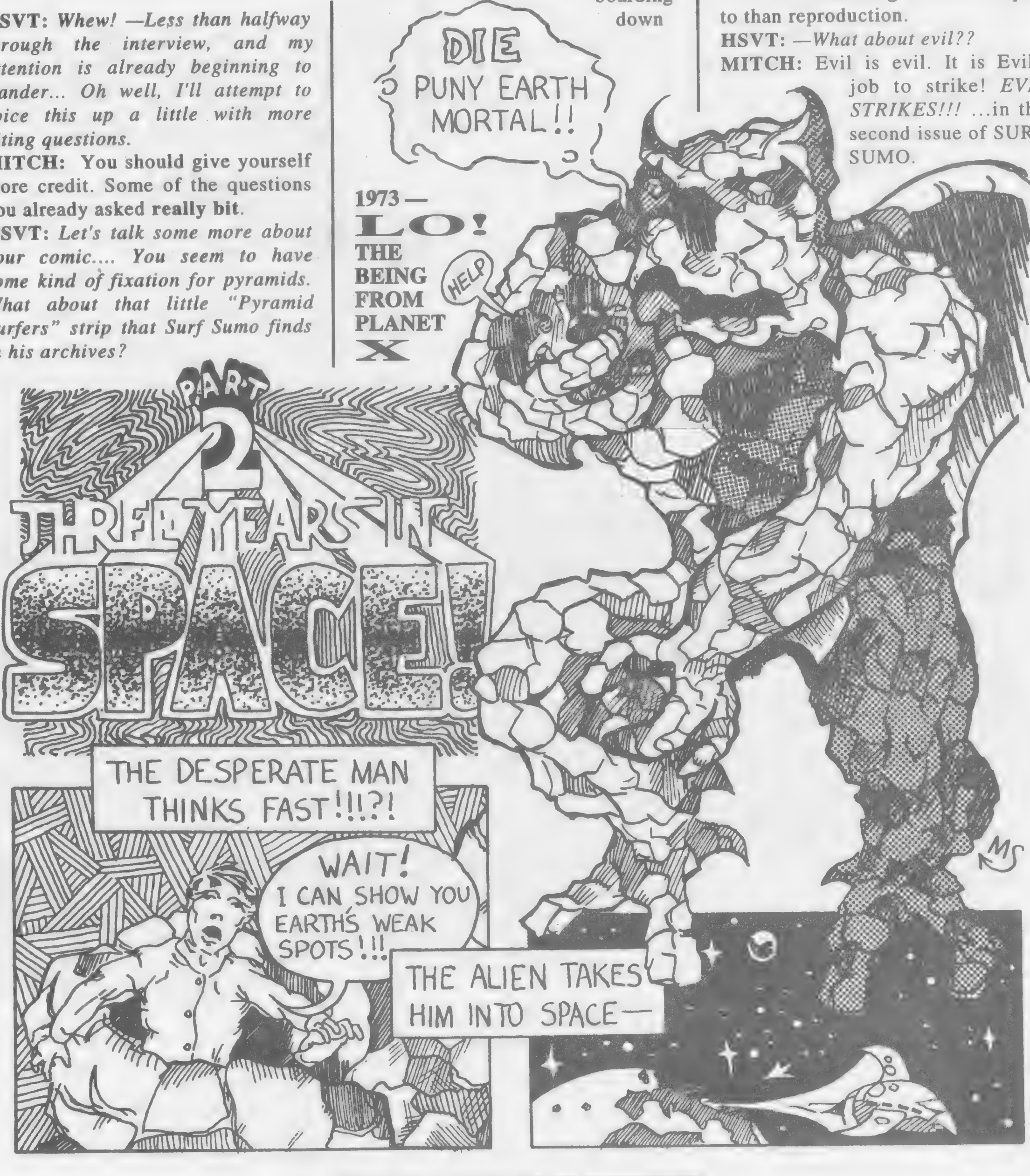
MITCH: I did the strip back in 1986, and it was printed on some T-shirts. Some teen-agers in Egypt must have seen the shirt, because it was reported in the WORLD WEEKLY NEWS that at least 85 of them went to jail for skateboarding down ancient pyramids!

HSVT: *Are you assuming responsibility for the whole mess??*

MITCH: I'm responsible for only my own actions. Too many people make excuses, or try to blame others for their own unthinking actions. I think most of the world's problems are the result of blatant or ignorant irresponsibility on the part of so-called adults. The world is being destroyed by overpopulation, yet our society still glorifies baby-making and motherhood. There must be something more to aspire to than reproduction.

HSVT: *—What about evil??*

MITCH: Evil is evil. It is Evil's job to strike! *EVIL STRIKES!!!* ...in the second issue of SURF SUMO.



1973 —
LO!
THE BEING FROM PLANET X

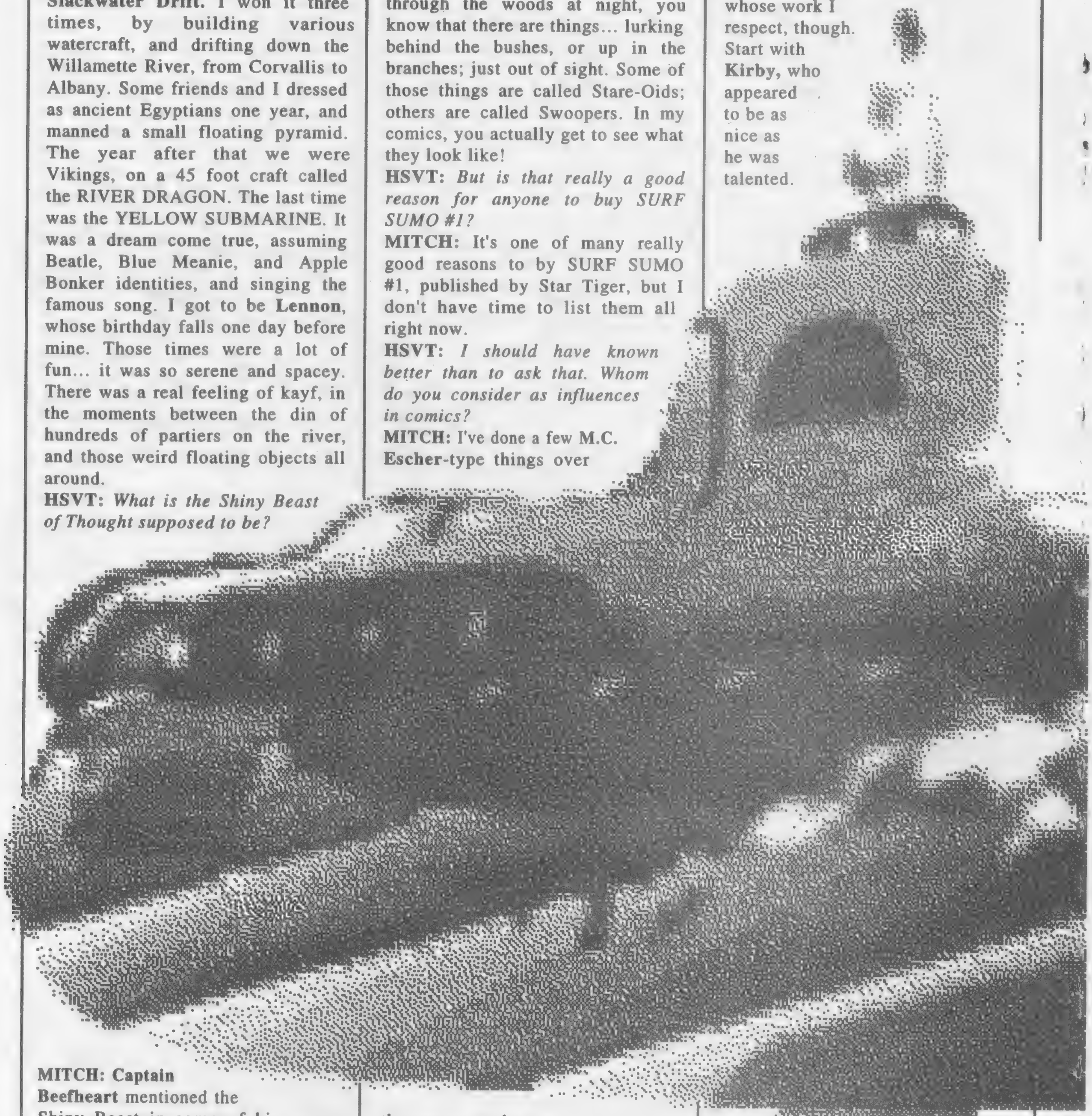
DIE PUNY EARTH MORTAL!!
HELP
PART 2
THREE YEARS IN SPACE!
THE DESPERATE MAN THINKS FAST!!!?!
WAIT! I CAN SHOW YOU EARTH'S WEAK SPOTS!!!
THE ALIEN TAKES HIM INTO SPACE—
MS

“. . . It was so serene and spacey.

HSVT: *What else have you done with pyramids?*

MITCH: Things you can't even imagine. They used to have a contest in these parts called the **Slackwater Drift.** I won it three times, by building various watercraft, and drifting down the Willamette River, from Corvallis to Albany. Some friends and I dressed as ancient Egyptians one year, and manned a small floating pyramid. The year after that we were Vikings, on a 45 foot craft called the RIVER DRAGON. The last time was the YELLOW SUBMARINE. It was a dream come true, assuming Beatle, Blue Meanie, and Apple Bonker identities, and singing the famous song. I got to be **Lennon**, whose birthday falls one day before mine. Those times were a lot of fun... it was so serene and spacey. There was a real feeling of kayf, in the moments between the din of hundreds of partiers on the river, and those weird floating objects all around.

HSVT: *What is the Shiny Beast of Thought supposed to be?*



MITCH: Captain Beefheart mentioned the Shiny Beast in some of his songs. I've tried give it flesh, reincarnating it as a sort of protagonist for Surf Sumo. You may notice other references to music or musicians I like, mutated appropriately. If you listen, you'll hear cosmic echoes of my comic universe in the background of **Frank Zappa's** universe of statistical density.

HSVT: *...And Stare-Oids??*

MITCH: If you've ever walked through the woods at night, you know that there are things... lurking behind the bushes, or up in the branches; just out of sight. Some of those things are called Stare-Oids; others are called Swoopers. In my comics, you actually get to see what they look like!

HSVT: *But is that really a good reason for anyone to buy SURF SUMO #1?*

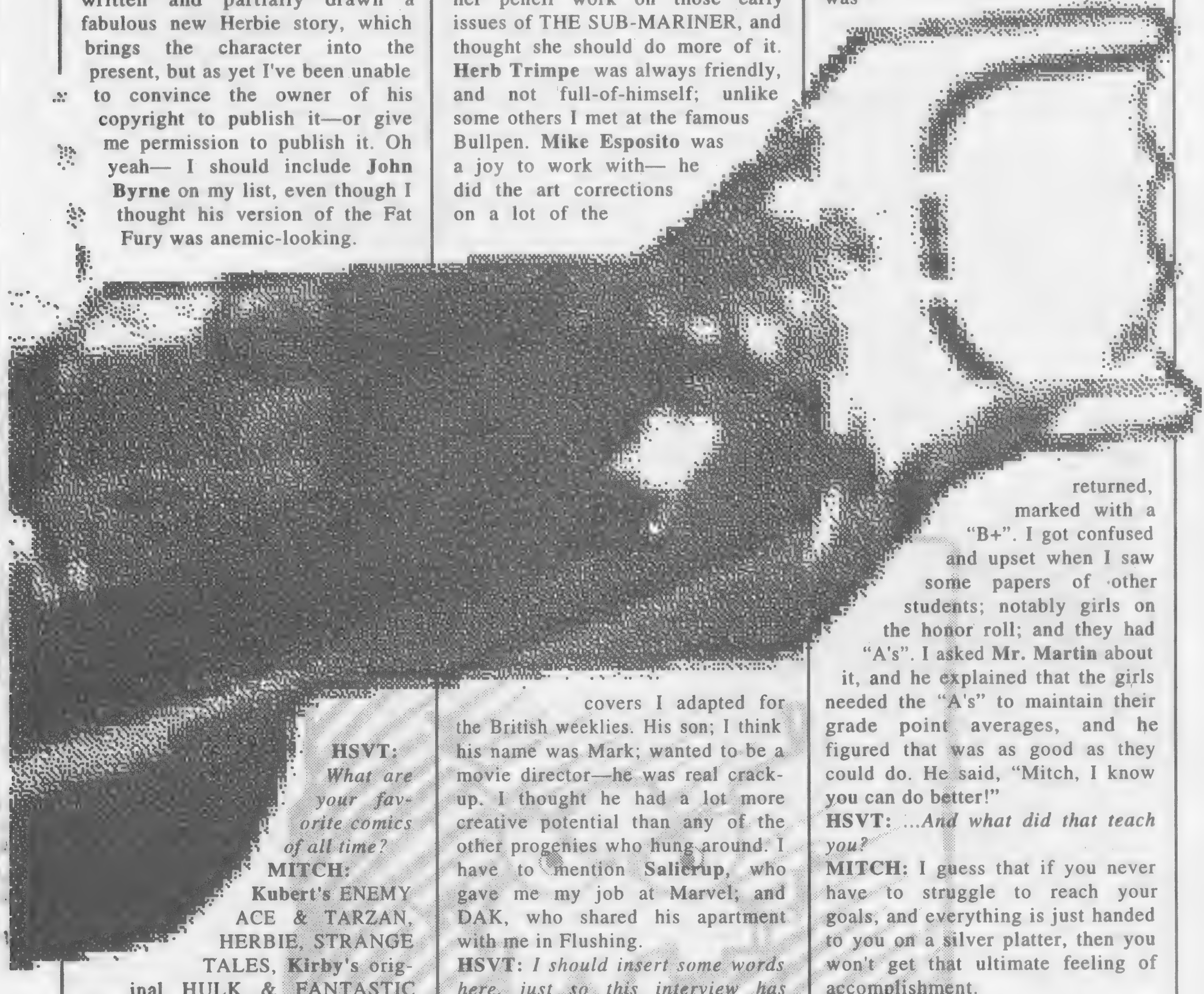
MITCH: It's one of many really good reasons to by SURF SUMO #1, published by Star Tiger, but I don't have time to list them all right now.

HSVT: *I should have known better than to ask that. Whom do you consider as influences in comics?*

MITCH: I've done a few M.C. **Escher**-type things over the years, or what you might call experimental drawings imitating artists I've liked, for my own entertainment. But, what-ever stylistic influences I've had are not the result of any conscious effort by me— that is; I haven't tried to imitate anyone else's style, except for in an obvious parody... or a tribute, where the original artist is given full credit. I'll be glad to list some of the people whose work I respect, though. Start with **Kirby**, who appeared to be as nice as he was talented. **Steranko** was a mind-bender, and brought a lot of new approaches... but he really pissed me off when he stopped doing comics! **Joe Kubert** also seemed honest and straightforward. He published one of my

There was a real feeling of kayf. . ."

letters in STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES #150, and he even took the time to drop me a personal note after I sent in some artwork that disappeared. **Ditko** ranks with the greatest, and you have to respect his consistent production over the years, but I wish he'd still do that really tight, intricate stuff, like in the old days. **Carl Barks, Kane, Wood, Starlin, Wrightson, Neil Adams, Kaluta, P. Craig Russell, Keown, Arthur Adams,** and **Jim Lee.** I also like **Ogden Whitney,** because he did HERBIE. I've written and partially drawn a fabulous new Herbie story, which brings the character into the present, but as yet I've been unable to convince the owner of his copyright to publish it—or give me permission to publish it. Oh yeah— I should include **John Byrne** on my list, even though I thought his version of the Fat Fury was anemic-looking.



HSVT: *What are your favorite comics of all time?*

MITCH: **Kubert's** ENEMY ACE & TARZAN, HERBIE, STRANGE TALES, **Kirby's** original HULK & FANTASTIC FOUR, early SPIDERMAN, PLASTIC-MAN, and many of those early sixties monster books from DC, Marvel, and ACG. I was a pretty big American Comics Group fan, and had a letter published in the August 1967 issue of ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN.

HSVT: *Is there anyone else you'd like to say something positive about?*

MITCH: Yeah, **Dan Adkins** and **Wally Wood** were the best inkers ever on **Kirby**. When I worked at Marvel, I got to meet Dan, who was also a heckuva nice guy. He gave me the original art from that two-page spread of a Zeppilin explosion from GIANT-SIZE DRACULA. **Marie Severin** helped me get some work as a colorist... I always liked her pencil work on those early issues of THE SUB-MARINER, and thought she should do more of it. **Herb Trimpe** was always friendly, and not full-of-himself; unlike some others I met at the famous Bullpen. **Mike Esposito** was a joy to work with— he did the art corrections on a lot of the covers I adapted for the British weeklies. His son; I think his name was Mark; wanted to be a movie director—he was real crack-up. I thought he had a lot more creative potential than any of the other progenies who hung around. I have to mention **Salicrup**, who gave me my job at Marvel; and DAK, who shared his apartment with me in Flushing.

HSVT: *I should insert some words here, just so this interview has some semblance of realism.*

MITCH: One person who taught me a lot about the ways of the world was my eleventh-grade English teacher, **Mr. Arthur Martin.** He gave me the opportunity to have fun and be creative in my writing, instead of concentrating so much on punctuation, syntax, and all that other boring stuff that other teachers tried to drum into my head over the years. We were supposed to be three-quarters through reading THE SCARLET LETTER; except that I was faking it; just picking up the gist from class discussion. So, our assignment was to write our own ending for the book. When **Mr. Martin** saw my story, he said it was the best one, and even read it to all of his classes. Afterwards, the paper was returned, marked with a "B+". I got confused and upset when I saw some papers of other students; notably girls on the honor roll; and they had "A's". I asked **Mr. Martin** about it, and he explained that the girls needed the "A's" to maintain their grade point averages, and he figured that was as good as they could do. He said, "Mitch, I know you can do better!"

HSVT: *...And what did that teach you?*

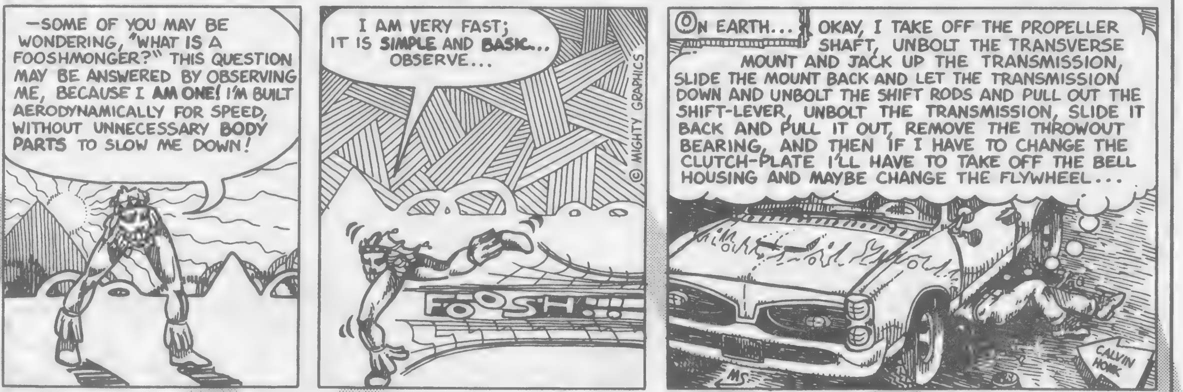
MITCH: I guess that if you never have to struggle to reach your goals, and everything is just handed to you on a silver platter, then you won't get that ultimate feeling of accomplishment.

HSVT: *I've always wanted to finish an interview by saying, "Amen". Unfortunately, we aren't done yet. You worked at Marvel way back in 1975. What else did you do at that time?*

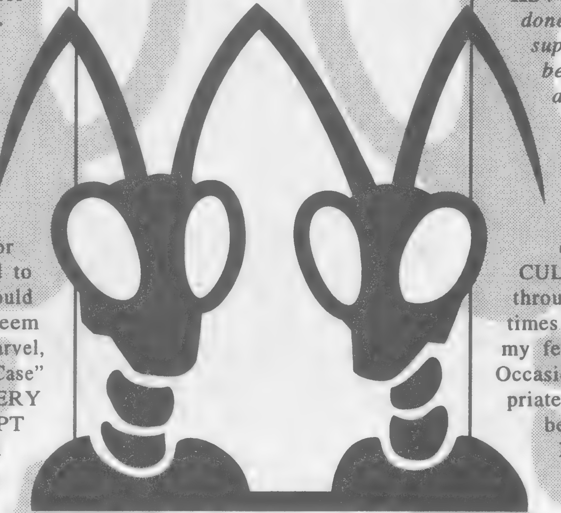
"Occasionally bitterness is appropriate,

Culture Hero

Fooshmongers were especial subjects, but Calvin Honk was the featured character in the 1976 newspaper comic strip.


—SOME OF YOU MAY BE WONDERING, "WHAT IS A FOOSHMONGER?" THIS QUESTION MAY BE ANSWERED BY OBSERVING ME, BECAUSE I AM ONE! I'M BUILT AERODYNAMICALLY FOR SPEED, WITHOUT UNNECESSARY BODY PARTS TO SLOW ME DOWN!
I AM VERY FAST; IT IS SIMPLE AND BASIC... OBSERVE...
FOOSH!!!
© MIGHTY GRAPHICS
ON EARTH...
OKAY, I TAKE OFF THE PROPELLER SHAFT, UNBOLT THE TRANSVERSE MOUNT AND JACK UP THE TRANSMISSION, SLIDE THE MOUNT BACK AND LET THE TRANSMISSION DOWN AND UNBOLT THE SHIFT RODS AND PULL OUT THE SHIFT-LEVER, UNBOLT THE TRANSMISSION, SLIDE IT BACK AND PULL IT OUT, REMOVE THE THROWOUT BEARING, AND THEN IF I HAVE TO CHANGE THE CLUTCH-PLATE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE OFF THE BELL HOUSING AND MAYBE CHANGE THE FLYWHEEL...
CALVIN HONK
MS

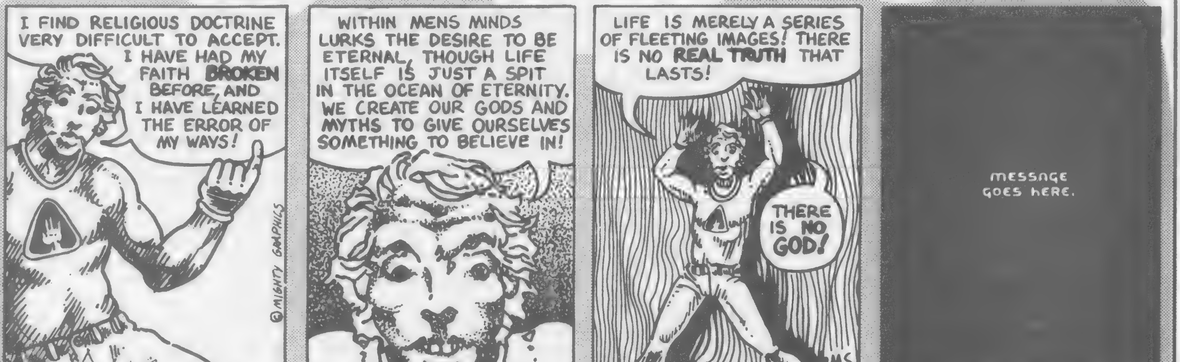
MITCH: Back then, I shared an apartment in Flushing with DAK, and rode the subway for 45 minutes to get to work. I tried doing a lot of different things, but mostly worked on altering comics covers for the British weeklies as my regular job. I went to **Neil Adams'** studio one day, and got my picture taken for photo reference by **Pat Broderick.** He used the picture for the splash page of "The Rat Pack", which was in PHOENIX #3, from Atlas Comics. I was the tall thug in the background. In DEMON HUNTER #1, I did a bunch of last-minute emergency lettering for **David Anthony Kraft**. I tried to convince **Larry Leiber** that I could be a writer, but he didn't seem impressed by my samples. At Marvel, I colored "Inside the Mummy Case" for JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #16, and the cover of CRYPT OF SHADOWS #16. I did emergency paste-ups for **Don McGregor** in KILLRAVEN #30. Don was a little volcano. He used to jump up on the desk, erupting with rant and rave, during editor's meetings. I could never bring myself to be that squeaky of a wheel, or maybe they would have paid more attention to me, too. I have a soft spot for Man-Wolf, because I got to give a lot of input to DAK, who was writing it. The splash page of CREATURES ON THE LOOSE #36 was my idea! "Lady Grinning Soul!", a story that was supposed to appear, but never quite made it into GIANT-SIZE DRACULA #6, was ghost-written by me.



HSVT: *So, in other words, you've done a ton of uncredited work. I suppose that is your excuse for being so bitter. Did you do anything in that era that anyone might have seen or heard of?*

MITCH: Sure. I came back to Oregon, and did a weekly strip for my college newspaper, called CULTURE HERO. I was going through some tough emotional times then, and I began expressing my feelings more in my artwork. Occasionally, bitterness is appropriate, such as for an ingredient in beer... or tears cried into beer.

HSVT: *You're breaking my heart! Also, making me thirsty.*


I FIND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT. I HAVE HAD MY FAITH BROKEN BEFORE, AND I HAVE LEARNED THE ERROR OF MY WAYS!
© MIGHTY GRAPHICS
WITHIN MENS MINDS LURKS THE DESIRE TO BE ETERNAL, THOUGH LIFE ITSELF IS JUST A SPIT IN THE OCEAN OF ETERNITY. WE CREATE OUR GODS AND MYTHS TO GIVE OURSELVES SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN!
LIFE IS MERELY A SERIES OF FLEETING IMAGES! THERE IS NO REAL TRUTH THAT LASTS!
THERE IS NO GOD!
MS
message goes here.

such as for an ingredient in beer...”

MITCH: I tend to have that kind of effect on myself. **Weird Al Yankovic,** might be thirsty for the dynamite new song idea I have, in case I ever get to meet him. I promise I will split the royalties with Denise.

HSVT: *Who's Denise?*

MITCH: She's an old nursinary friend of the family.

HSVT: *Quite the little word-coiner, aren't we? We'll let it go at that. I'll give you this opportunity to pitch anything you forgot.*

MITCH: Why thankyou. I have fifty full-color Mantis illustrations I did for an unpublished coffee table book called MANTHOLOGY. It's a collaboration with my friend, **Steve Rothermund,** who came up with a lot of the concepts, and wrote some verse. We haven't found a publisher for it as yet.

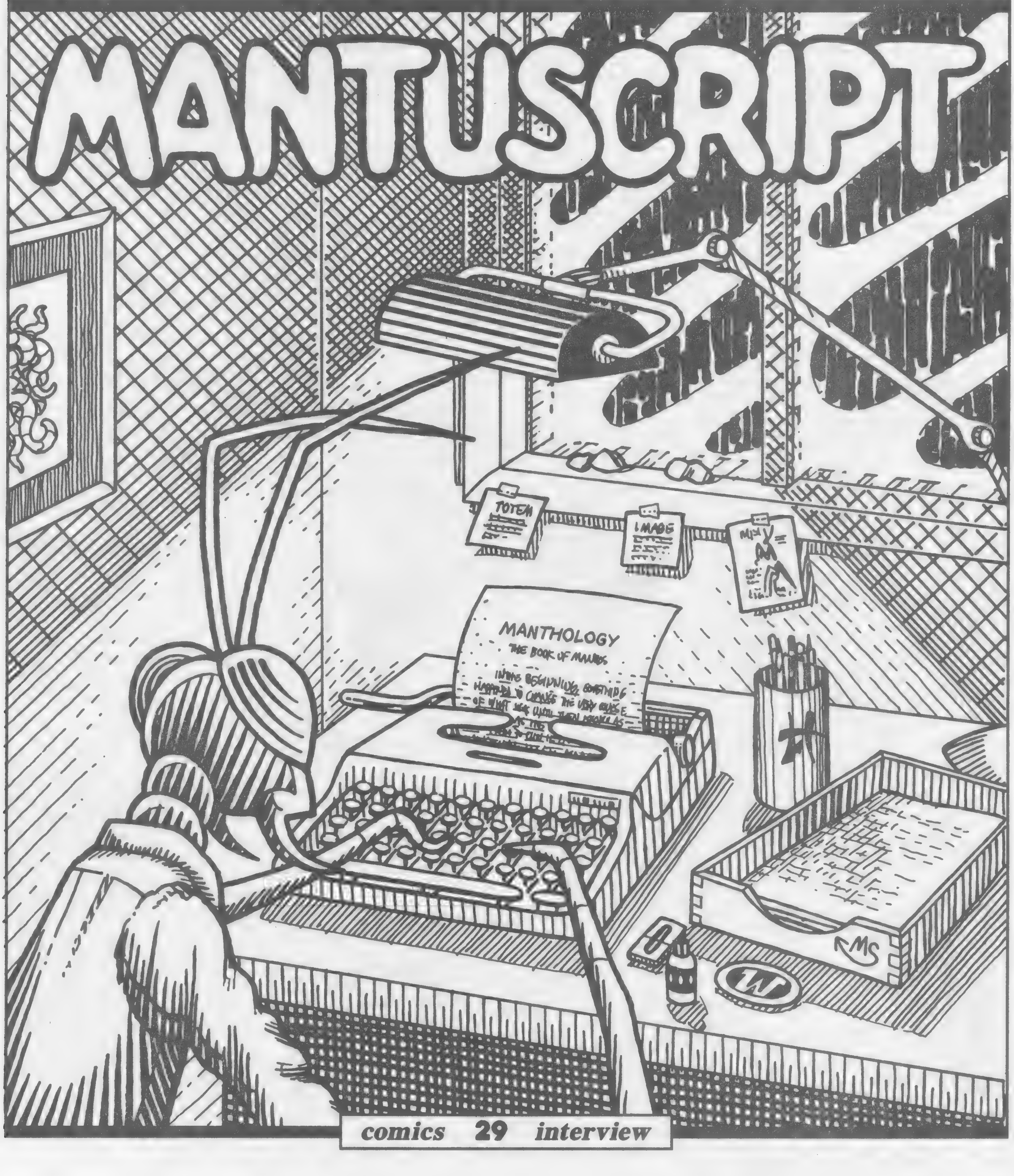
HSVT: *Well gosh; you just haven't had any luck, have you?*

MITCH: Oh, I don't know... I think SURF SUMO is a pretty big break, and **Star Tiger** deserves the credit for giving me this opportunity!

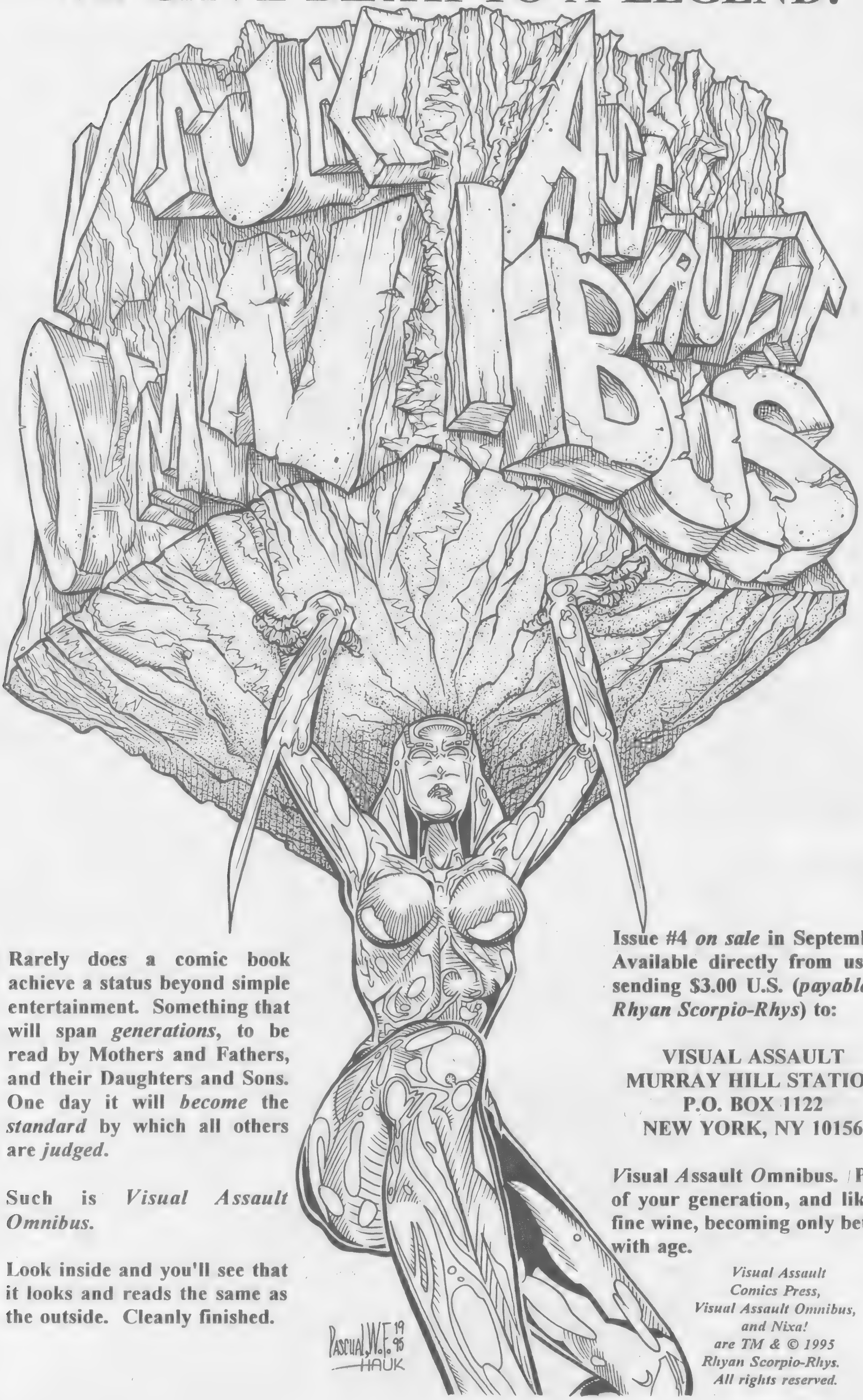
HSVT: *So; why aren't there more big guns, violence, and bare butts in your comic?*

MITCH: I guess I must be more mature than some of those other comic book guys.

HSVT: *Amen. (sarcasm)*


MANTUSCRIPT
TOTEM
IMAGE
MANTHOLOGY
THE BOOK OF MANTIS
IN THE BEGINNING, SOMETHING HAPPENED TO CHANGE THE VERY COURSE OF WHAT WAS UNTIL THEN KNOWN AS
MS
W

ANYONE CAN CREATE A COMIC BOOK...
WE GAVE BIRTH TO A LEGEND.



Rarely does a comic book achieve a status beyond simple entertainment. Something that will span *generations*, to be read by Mothers and Fathers, and their Daughters and Sons. One day it will *become* the *standard* by which all others are *judged*.

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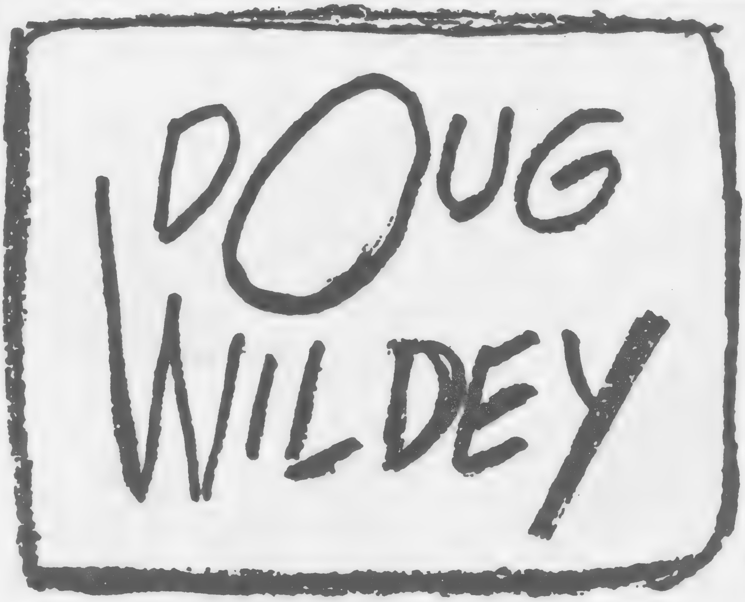
VISUAL ASSAULT...INTERVIEWED!

Todd Greenley, nomadic reporter at large, tracked down the reclusive Rhyan Scorpio-Rhys and Juanita Hicks, Publishers of Visual Assault Comics Press, for an interview.

Todd Greenley: *What kind of name is Visual Assault Comics Press?*
Rhyan Scorpio-Rhys: The kind of name you *remember.*
Juanita Hicks: Whenever we introduce the company name to anyone, we always get that *what-the-hell-did-you-just-say?* pause. It's our intention to make you stop and think.
TG: Why haven't I heard of Visual Assault before?
RSR: You obviously don't travel in the right circles.
JH: *VACP*'s been around since 1993. Possible reasons why we're still relatively unknown are: 1) We've only done one print ad before. 2) We don't tour conventions. 3) Our book, *Visual Assault Omnibus*, hasn't been reviewed by the larger trade magazines.
TG: Give us a quick rundown of your "bad babes" and "massive gunned psycho-shooters".
RSR: "Bad babes?" We don' need no stinkin' bad babes! What we've got are real women & men, some paranormal and some not, thrust into surreal circumstances.
TG: What? No throat-slitting, bloodsucking, half-naked, gut-punching, head-smashing, bearded paranoic, musclebound, egomaniacal, psychotic nyphos? What kind of comic company are you running, anyway?
JH: We pride ourselves on adding dimension to our main characters and exploring how the ramifications of their actions affect everyone else. We're very fond of the "ripple effect". Take *Nixa*, for example. She's the cornerstone of all our present storylines. Her appearance on Earth directly affects every other character in our universe. It's fun to watch people try to find the "connecting factors".
RSR: What kind of company are we running? The kind you grew up with. The kind that will grow with you.
TG: Is there still a market for compelling stories about intriguing characters among today's comic book readers?
(In unison): Definitely!
JH: Especially with a majority of the "hot" comics looking like one big colorful splash page of blood. With *Visual Assault Omnibus* we're picking up the readers who are tired of that same old "greasy kidstuff". We offer quality stories in a large 64 page anthology format for only $3.00. It's not another "flip-thru" book...*it's a read!*
TG: Aside from your anthology series, do you see any of your characters branching out into individual titles?
JH: The readers are pretty much split on seeing *Nixa!* and *Maseo, Hero-Killer* graduate to a full-length book. Plans are currently in the works to do a Nixa one-shot and a Maseo limited series. Improbable Impact has a large number of readers intrigued, but confused.
RSR: We're gonna change that real soon.
TG: One of the factors that drives the current comics market is the talent putting out comics, artists and writers primarily. Who are some of the names behind your current and future comics? Are there any current hot talents, or anybody you think will be hot?
RSR: "Do I think they'll be hot?" Man, I guarantee you'll be hearing these names again real soon. On the artist's side we've got: *Ted Beargeon*, artist of the "Galactic Empire" card game; *Steve Hauk*, penciller/inker of Fish Shticks, a Fish Police spin off, and inker on Marvel's Barbie; *Adam DeKraker*, artist of "Hero Alliance Quarterly" and various projects including works for Anubis Press, and Badroach Comics; *Dennis Avent & Ted Yates*, creators of Z's "The Hive"; *Steve Ellis*, artist of various projects including: Marvel's "Spiderwoman," and "Ironman," Valiant's "Ninjak," DC's "Hawkman," & "Lobo"; and keep an eye out for *Ben Chan, Tim Otis* and *Jean-Paul Deshong.* On the writer's side there's: *Timothy Perry*, creator of Delta Comic's "Dark Claw," Draculina Publishing's "Sabra Blade," and various written projects for Cozy Coffin Publication, Perry Comics; *William Marden*, writer for Blackout Comics' "Extremes of Violet", Dramenon Studios' "Dreamwolves" and other projects including work for AMF Comics; also watch for *Jens Altmann* and *Steve Antczak.*
TG: Whew, that's a mouthful! Any major projects on the drawing board that you can talk about?
RSR: As a matter of fact, we have two sci-fi graphic novels that we're wrapping up as we speak. The first is a cyberpunk gambler's tale entitled *Sofa Jet City Crisis*, brought to you by *Yours Truly* and *Adam DeKraker.* And the second is a futuristic look into the life of a man, wrongly persecuted for tax evasion and relentlessly hunted by an inhuman tax collector. *The Revenue Man* is written by *me* and pencilled by newcomer *Winston Pascual.*
TG: Look into your crystal ball. Where do you see Visual Assault in five years? Ten?
JH: Five years? *Visual Assault* will have a solid product line with items ranging from a number of individual comic titles to apparel to games.
RSR: Ten years? We'll be hardwired and totally multi-media by then, baby!
TG: And, last but not least, assuming Visual Assault survives the current comic industry crisis, and lives to reach a ripe old age, what would you like to put on your tombstone?
(In unison): *Leave a good looking corpse!*
JH: Just kidding. I'm really kinda partial to "Where the action never stops."
RSR: The tombstone should read: *"Visual Assault Comics Press. (pause) What-the-hell-did-you-just-say?"*

For more information and/or submission guidelines,
write Rhyan & Juanita at:
Visual Assault
Murray Hill Station
P.O. Box 1122
NY, NY 10156

"In one show I daringly put a kiss between her and Race."



This is the final part of the last Doug Wildey interview. As stated in the introduction to part one, Doug passed on two weeks after getting us the edited copy for this piece.

But more than anything else, Doug's words here about his present and future projects reveal him as a vital man. His career in animation, comics, and Western art could only be halted by his death. We should count ourselves lucky if we possess half his power, creativity, and drive when the Grim Reaper tears our tickets.

We are glad to have known Doug Wildey . . .

LOU MOUGIN: *Would Dr. No have been the model for Dr. Zin?*

DOUG WILDEY: Actually, no. I hadn't consciously thought of it. It's possible that it could have been in the back of my mind, I suppose. It's just that we wanted a really bigger-than-life type of villain. And we alluded in one show that Zin was the arch-enemy of Dr. Quest. We didn't have him in every show, but it was sort of an easy way to make things happen. This guy would be the Machiavellian string-puller in the background.

LOU: *The Professor Moriarity of the QUEST world?*

DOUG: Yeah! As a matter of fact, I think that's a closer analogy. I hadn't thought of that either, but that's a good point.

LOU: *How's about Jezebel Jade? Was she inspired by the Dragon Lady in TERRY, or am I wrong on that?*

DOUG: That's fairly close, too. Yeah, I'd say that would be one analogy. There are others, of course. I used to go to the movies a lot. And a lot of movies, especially the Warner Brothers' black-and-white detective stories, generally had a lot of these sort of evil-but-beautiful villainesses.

LOU: *Femmes fatale.*

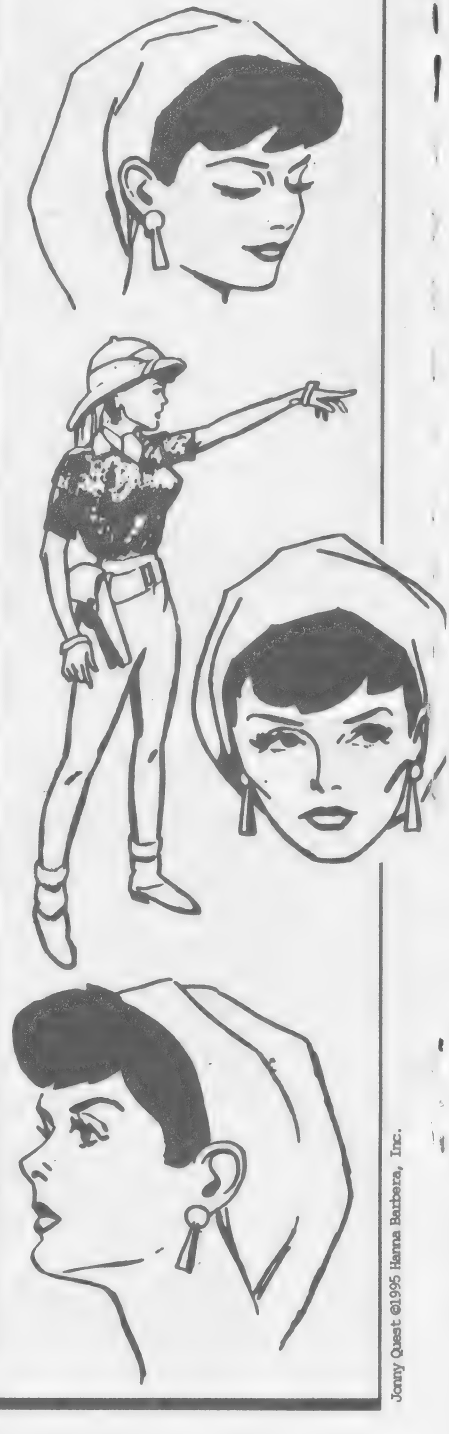
DOUG: Yeah, femmes fatale. I also wanted her to compete. In other words, most of the stuff she did, she did for money. We did one show in which I daringly put a kiss between her and Race, which alluded to the fact that Race had known her from way back, and that they had had a thing going at one point. So, yeah, she worked out okay. She worked better, I think, than Dr. Zin. Because nobody knows, when you get to be a Professor Moriarty, or a Dr. No if you will, what their motivations are. They seem to have all kinds of money; they can build huge buildings and plants and whatever. I mean, money really isn't their objective. So I guess they're after power. And I always liked the part about people doing adventures for money.

LOU: *Right, the mercenary kind of thing.*

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Doug Wildey.
Born: 2 May, 1922 — Yonkers, NY.
Family Configuration: Wife and two daughters.
Favorite TV Commercial I've Worked On: One for AT&T when rockets were first being sent up, with a rocket's blast coming into the screen and so forth..

"JEZEBEL JADE"



Jonny Quest ©1995 Hanna Barbera, Inc.

"JONNY's got 140 markets, all over the world."

DOUG: Yeah, mercenary.

LOU: *Or just to pay the bills.*

DOUG: Yeah. I thought it added something that hadn't been seen before.

LOU: *I remember one thing about JONNY QUEST, when I was watching it as a kid, which is that it was the first time in a cartoon — or at least a Hanna-Barbera cartoon — that you'd actually see somebody dying. You could see somebody fall off a cliff, and, bang, that was it for him!*

DOUG: Yeah, this was not the ROAD RUNNER. People brought that up from time to time. A couple of network people would mention that, but nobody made a big issue of it. It seems to me that, again, going back to movies, you'll always see somebody getting shot or blown away. If it wasn't done to much excess, I didn't feel that it was any problem.

LOU: *So how long did JONNY run? About two or three years, or what?*

DOUG: The original series had 26 episodes. All 26 episodes ran in 1964. There was then a layoff. Nobody touched the show for another year. Then I think CBS picked it up and ran it, I believe, on Sunday afternoons. Then it intermittently ran on NBC for awhile. Then the overseas market picked it up, and I don't know how many markets it's got now. I have never talked to **Ted Turner**, although I understand that he's a fan. He's an actual JONNY QUEST fan. But I think JONNY's got something like 140 markets, all over the world.

LOU: *And these are all the original 26 episodes?*

DOUG: Yes.

LOU: *Nothing's been done for it since then?*

DOUG: No. Actually, I was called back to talk to them about doing a Saturday morning version of JONNY QUEST. It didn't work out. We couldn't get together on money, or concept, or whatever.

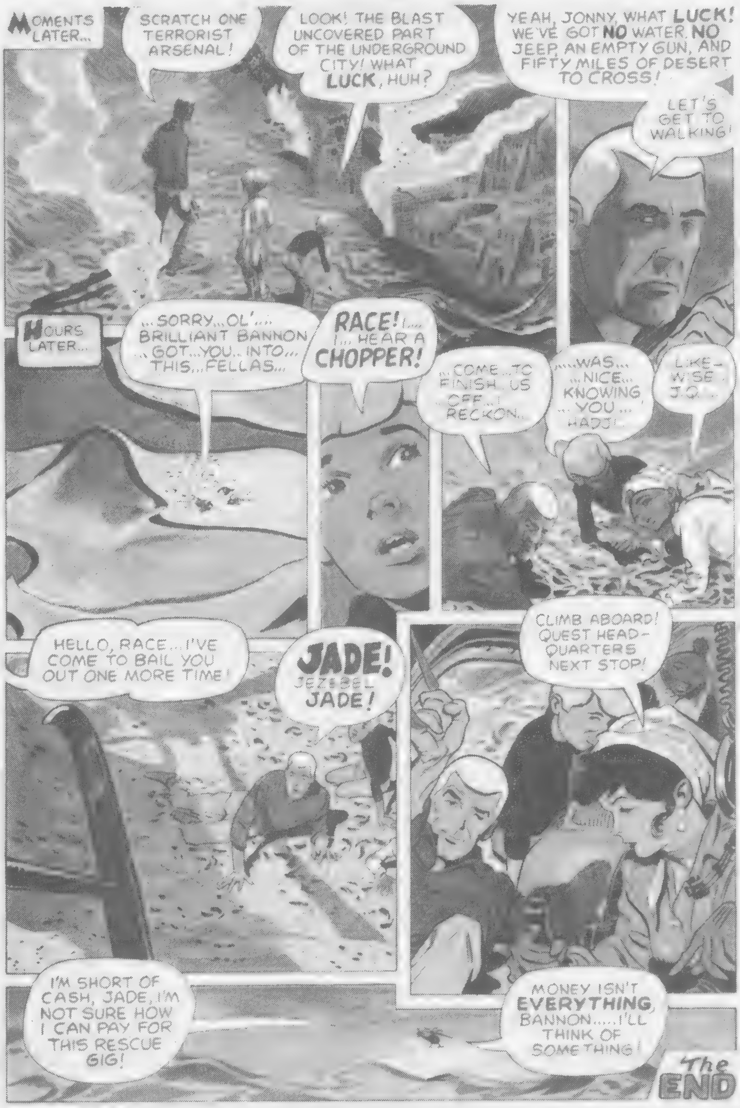
LOU: *Did they want to water it down too much, or what?*

DOUG: Well, even at that time, it was up to me. But the budget for Saturday morning just wasn't there. It was a prime-time show and we'd had a little bit to work with. But on Saturday morning, it would just turn out to be garbage. So I was happy. They finally did some, and they weren't very good.

LOU: *Were you involved in that one-shot JONNY QUEST comic that Gold Key put out in 1964?*

DOUG: I did the cover.

LOU: *From there on, you got involved somewhat in the Marvel cartoons in the mid-'60s, right?*


MOMENTS LATER...
SCRATCH ONE TERRORIST ARSENAL!
LOOK! THE BLAST UNCOVERED PART OF THE UNDERGROUND CITY! WHAT LUCK, HUH?
YEAH, JONNY, WHAT LUCK! WE'VE GOT NO WATER, NO JEEP, AN EMPTY GUN, AND FIFTY MILES OF DESERT TO CROSS!
LET'S GET TO WALKING!
HOURS LATER...
...SORRY...OL'... BRILLIANT BANNON ...GOT...YOU...INTO... THIS...FELLAS...
RACE!... I... HEAR A CHOPPER!
...COME...TO FINISH...US OFF...I RECKON...
.....WAS... ...NICE... KNOWING ...YOU... HADJI...
LIKE-WISE J.Q....
HELLO, RACE... I'VE COME TO BAIL YOU OUT ONE MORE TIME!
JADE! JEZEBEL JADE!
CLIMB ABOARD! QUEST HEAD-QUARTERS NEXT STOP!
I'M SHORT OF CASH, JADE, I'M NOT SURE HOW I CAN PAY FOR THIS RESCUE GIG!
MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING, BANNON.....I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!
The END

Jonny Quest ©1995 Hanna Barbera, Inc.

Previous page: Doug's original 1964 model sheets from JONNY QUEST (the cartoon). Above: Doug's '86 comic version (both with Jezebel Jade).

DOUG: Yes.

LOU: *At Gantray-Lawrence?*

DOUG: That's right. They had Marvel Comics cartoons. I was the art director on the show about the guy who swims underwater — Namor?

LOU: *Yeah, Namor the Sub-Mariner.*

DOUG: Right. They were five-minute episodes. We put in some time on that from scratch. I had forgotten about that, strangely. After that one I went on a show called SKY HAWKS.

LOU: *And around 1967, the superheroes got to be a big thing on Saturday morning, as I remember. They've got you down here as having worked on THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THE MIGHTY MIGHTOR, and THE HERCULOIDS.*

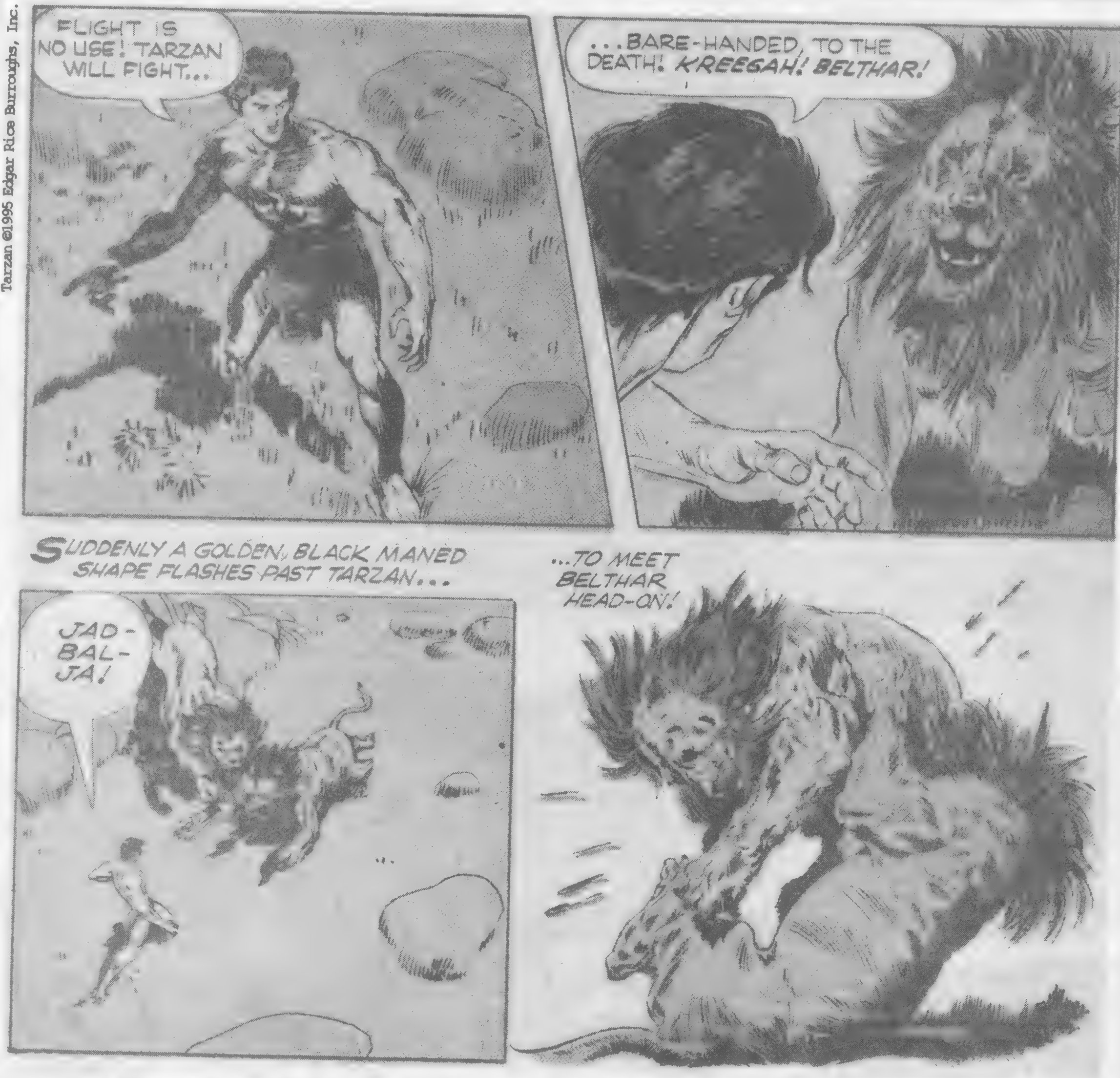
DOUG: Not THE FANTASTIC FOUR. I did THE HERCULOIDS and the other one.

LOU: *Did you create them?*

DOUG: No. I did mainly models and storyboards.

LOU: *The first place that I encountered your art was on Gold Key's TARZAN. You came right after Russ Manning's stint on the book, and I thought you did a great job adapting those Edgar Rice Burroughs stories., like TARZAN AT*

"I did nine issues of TARZAN adaptations."


FLIGHT IS NO USE! TARZAN WILL FIGHT...
...BARE-HANDED, TO THE DEATH! KREEGAH! BELTHAR!
SUDDENLY A GOLDEN, BLACK MANED SHAPE FLASHES PAST TARZAN...
...TO MEET BELTHAR HEAD-ON!
JAD-BAL-JA!

Tarzan ©1995 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

September 1969 issue of Gold Key's TARZAN OF THE APES (#187). Pencils and inks are by Doug.

THE EARTH'S CORE.

DOUG: Somebody gave me a call and told me I could do the artwork on it. They had written scripts directly from the **Burroughs** stories, which I had never read. *(Laughter.)* **Burroughs** was never one of my favorites. Although later on, when I did those stories, a friend of mine, **Ray Bradbury** —

LOU: *Oh, you know Ray Bradbury? Great!*

DOUG: Yeah, Ray was a big **Edgar Rice Burroughs** fan. He started out when he was, like, 12 years old, writing stories imitating **Edgar Rice Burroughs.**

LOU: *Right, the Mars stories he did in imitation of Burroughs.*

DOUG: Yeah. So every time I got my three free copies of TARZAN, I would swing by Ray's office and drop one off for his collection. I did nine issues of TARZAN adaptations, and I also did the issues that adapted NBC's TARZAN show.

LOU: *Can you tell me something about that one?*

DOUG: Yeah, that was **Ron Ely.**

LOU: *Did you ever hear back from Ron about them?*

DOUG: No, I never met Ron. I always thought he had a kind of nice screen personality, and that he had a nice, lean, rugged build on him. I'm surprised that he kind of dropped out of sight.

LOU: *Considering how many injuries he got when he was doing TARZAN, it might be understandable.* (Laughter.)

DOUG: Well, they tried him on DOC SAVAGE, and I thought he did a reasonably good job there. Script-wise, it was poor, but I think he did a good job, himself.

LOU: *I don't think they gave him much to work with in that one.*

DOUG: No.

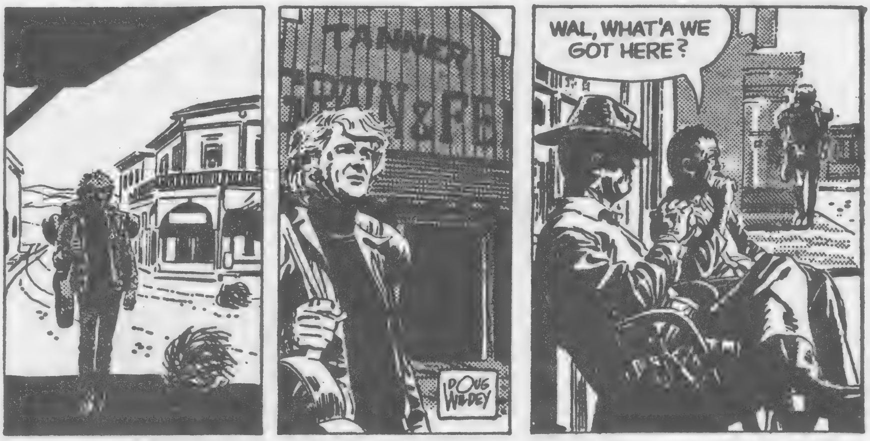
LOU: *From the late '60s on, you got involved with TV commercials and industrial films?*

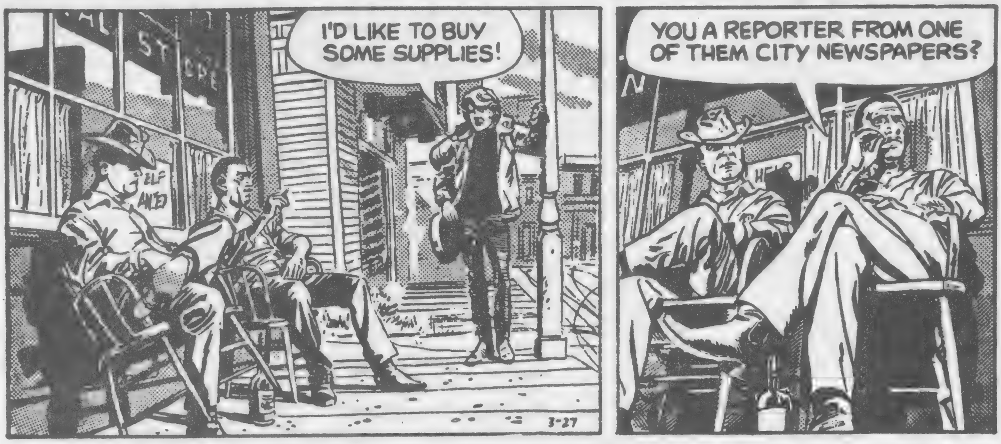
DOUG: Yeah, I did some industrial films. Storyboarding and layout. I kind of

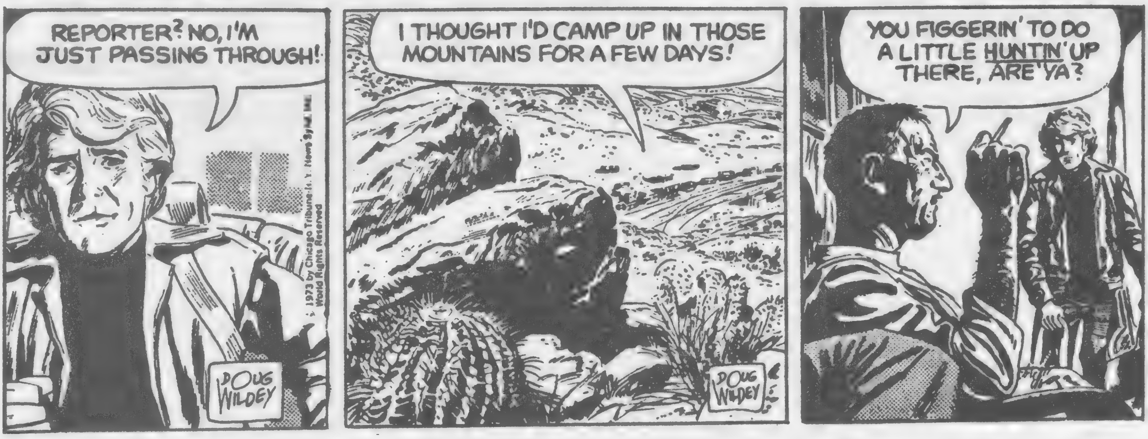
"AMBLER I wrote for television. Barbera didn't like it."

©1995 Doug & Ellen Wildey

Doug's favorite creation — AMBLER. Says Doug: "I wrote AMBLER for television. Later, I decided to turn it into a comic strip and send it to King Features."


TANNER
GRAIN & FE
WAL, WHAT'A WE GOT HERE?
DOUG WILDEY


I'D LIKE TO BUY SOME SUPPLIES!
3-27
YOU A REPORTER FROM ONE OF THEM CITY NEWSPAPERS?


REPORTER? NO, I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH!
© 1973 by Chicago Tribune–N.Y. News Synd. Inc. World Rights Reserved
DOUG WILDEY
I THOUGHT I'D CAMP UP IN THOSE MOUNTAINS FOR A FEW DAYS!
DOUG WILDEY
YOU FIGGERIN' TO DO A LITTLE HUNTIN' UP THERE, ARE YA?

did the picture totally. Most of them were non-animated; they were film strips. One of them, believe it or not, was on the Mormon Church.

LOU: *How did you get that one?*

DOUG: Some artist had the job and he hired me. I went through a period, maybe three or four months, doing the history of the Mormon Church. It was an industrial film in the sense that it was simply pictures. Still illustrations, photographed.

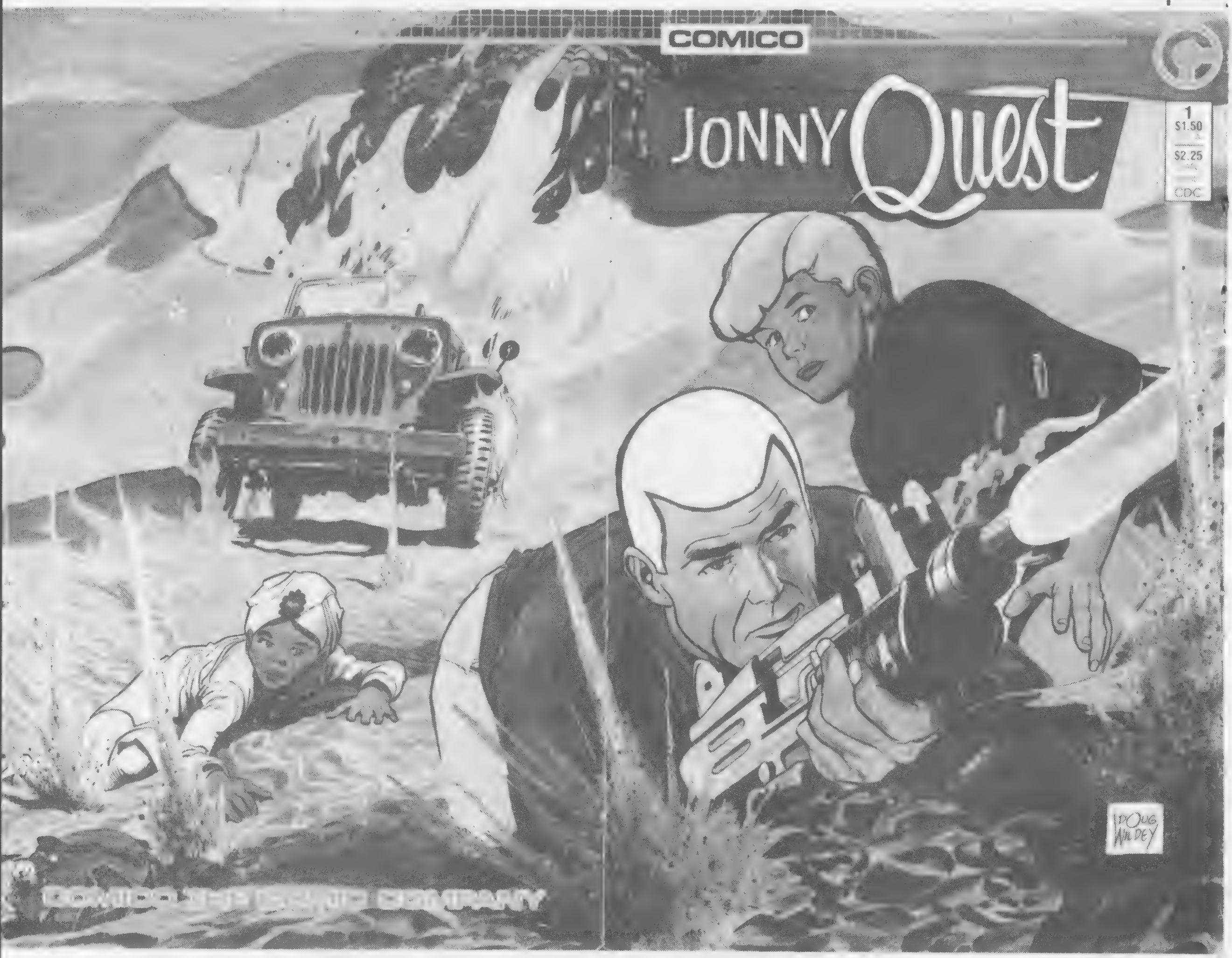
LOU: *And you put them in sequence with a storyboard?*

DOUG: Yeah. As far as I know, they still show that thing at Brigham Young University, but I'm not sure of that. Then I did a bunch of SGT. ROCKs for DC.

LOU: *In 1972-75, you had a syndicated strip called AMBLER. I've never seen it, so can you fill me in on the details?*

DOUG: AMBLER I wrote the outline for, for television. I only showed it to **Joe Barbera.** Nobody else ever saw it. And he didn't like it. So I decided to turn it into a comic strip and send it to King Features. King wanted to buy it. They started asking me, "What's going to happen six or eight weeks from now?" And I kept giving them outlines. And they would keep asking for more, so I dumped them. Then I called the CHICAGO TRIBUNE/NEW YORK NEWS, and they bought it

"I was on RETURN TO THE PLANET OF THE APES."



Wildey's first wrap-around cover for JONNY QUEST. It went on Comico's first issue (June 1986).

over the weekend.

LOU: *Was it a western strip?*

DOUG: No, it was a strip about Ambler, who was called disparagingly, "That *hippie!" (Laughter.)* It was about a long-haired guy with a guitar who travelled around having adventures. I did the Sunday, to kick the strip off, with lyrics, and illustrated them, and got into the story that way.

LOU: *Did you write the lyrics yourself?*

DOUG: Yeah.

LOU: *Was it kind of like ROUTE 66 with the guy and his guitar?*

DOUG: In a way, yeah. It was also compared to a show called THEN CAME BRONSON —

LOU: *Yeah, I remember that.*

DOUG: — and a couple of others. It had no bearing on either of those things, because it was all about music. Every story had a musical background — classical, rock, country-western, jazz. And the characters were either musicians or had some kind of musical background. They also published it in France, in the newspaper LE MONDE, complete, as sort of a book. They took the dailies and colored them, and translated them into French. It worked pretty good.

LOU: *Between 1975 and RIO, what were you doing?*

DOUG: I was the director-producer on a show called RETURN TO THE PLANET OF THE APES.

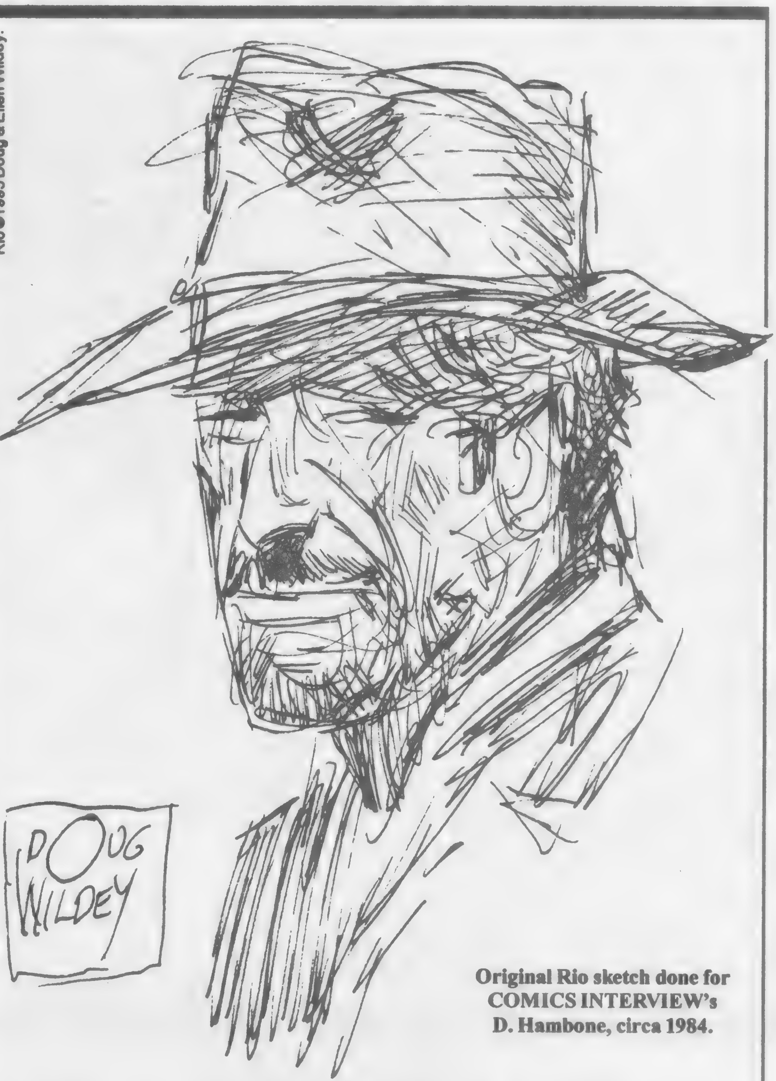
LOU: *Oh, was that the cartoon?*

DOUG: Yeah. It ran on NBC on Saturday mornings. It ran one season. I wrote it, and strung it together loosely, into a saga. If you're familiar with the lore of PLANET OF THE APES, they had these humans who were the lower beings, and the apes were the rulers. And the humans were like savages, hiding out in the weeds or whatever, trying to avoid being captured or put to death by the apes. So as I went along, week by week, I would have the humans slowly pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, to the point that they'd be able to overcome some of the obstacles presented by the apes.

LOU: *Earlier on, we covered how you introduced RIO at New Media and then Eclipse. How did it come to be published next by Comico?*

DOUG: They called me to do an original JONNY QUEST story for the first issue of their JONNY QUEST comic. At that time, I told them that I had this western book, and I'd like to do 'em a graphic

"I wrote the theme song for the GODZILLA show."



Rio ©1995 Doug & Ellen Wildey.

Original Rio sketch done for COMICS INTERVIEW's D. Hambone, circa 1984.

novel. So they agreed.

LOU: *Was the Comico book a reprint or an original?*

DOUG: It was a reprint of the Eclipse book.

LOU: *Then you did another RIO book. Was that for Comico, or for Dark Horse?*

DOUG: The second graphic novel was called RIO RIDES AGAIN, and it was published by Marvel.

LOU: *I didn't know that. It must have been a Marvel Graphic Novel.*

DOUG: What I want to interject here is that after PLANET OF THE APES, Marvel went to the studio, which was DePatie-Freleng. They wanted to do the She-Hulk and the Fantastic Four. At the same time, **Joe Barbera** had gotten hold of Godzilla. 26 episodes. I didn't like the superhero stuff, never did. So I opted to take the Godzilla job. Shortly afterwards, I designed another show about this jungle girl, called JANA OF THE JUNGLE. I did both shows, two shows a week.

LOU: *I imagine that kept you busy enough.*

DOUG: Yeah. It was a bad show.

LOU: *You mean JANA or GODZILLA?*

DOUG: Both of 'em! *(Laughter.)* Only because the network was very, very afraid of everything. They didn't want this big monster to be *bad*. They wanted him to be like a teacher's pet.

LOU: *It's hard for me to visualize Godzilla as teacher's pet after watching him stomp all over Tokyo and blitz jet fighters with his atomic breath.*

DOUG: Yeah. Did you ever happen to catch that show?

LOU: *No, I caught the movies, but never the cartoon.*

DOUG: Because I wrote the theme song for the main title on that show. I shot the JANA OF THE JUNGLE stuff on a rotoscope stage in Hollywood. The cameraman was 18 feet up, balancing an Arriflex on his shoulder, shooting down. I had the world's first downshot in rotoscope animation. And it worked out very well. The show was lousy, but the main titles were great.

LOU: *In rotoscope you'd have regular human models. Do you remember the name of the person who played Jana?*

DOUG: No. As a matter of fact, I believe it was the same lady who played the lead on GODZILLA.

LOU: *Oh, she didn't play Godzilla, I hope!* (Laughter.)

DOUG: No, that was **Ted Cassidy,** who's now dead.

LOU: *Ted Cassidy mimicked Godzilla?*

DOUG: Yeah. He was also in JANA OF THE JUNGLE. So we had Ted come in and I spent a couple of hours having him yell into a wastebasket loudly. *(Laughter.)* We mixed the sound several times together, and that's how we got the roar of Godzilla.

LOU: *I didn't know he was involved in that, but for somebody who played Lurch on THE ADDAMS FAMILY, it sounds quite fitting. Okay, what are your plans for the future, with RIO and otherwise?*

DOUG: Actually, I am now working on — are you ready for this?

LOU: *Go.*

DOUG: A western animated series for Universal's cartoon studio.

LOU: *What's it gonna be called?*

DOUG: I don't know. They're still researching a bunch of titles. We'll get to one eventually. It's a straight story, no talking horses or anything else like that. It's a straight show.

LOU: *Is it going to be a TV show or a feature film?*

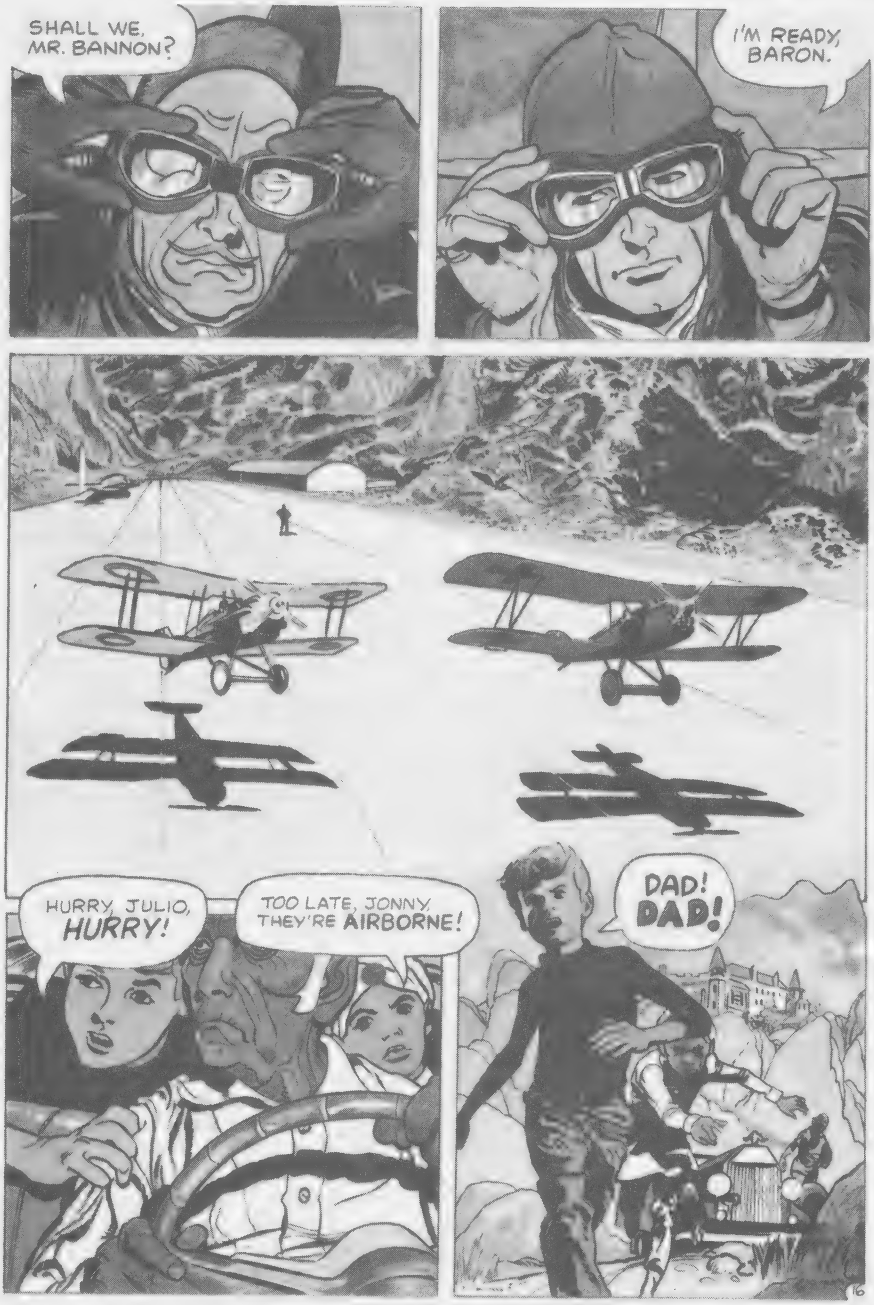
DOUG: TV.

LOU: *Do you have any of the characters worked out, or anything else?*

DOUG: Yeah, I've done one presentation, and I'm now right at the moment doing the seven characters to be painted on cels. There's some toy companies involved in it. And speaking of toy companies, I don't know if you know this, but there's an outfit in Indiana called THE SHAPE OF THINGS. And they have put out a Jonny Quest model kit. So I illustrated the box and I designed the figures, and the sculptor did a magnificent job. It's beautiful. I just saw it day before yesterday. They sent me photos. So he now has three characters done. I think he also wants me to take it to a show in Louisville, Kentucky.

LOU: *Will that be the first appearance of the figure?*

"I've never really read comics. I know that's strange."


SHALL WE, MR. BANNON?
I'M READY, BARON.
HURRY, JULIO, HURRY!
TOO LATE, JONNY, THEY'RE AIRBORNE!
DAD! DAD!
16

Jonny Quest TM & ©1995 Ted Turner Broadcasting.

Doug re-created one of his best-known JONNY QUEST stories for the first issue of the comic book, J.Q. CLASSICS.

DOUG: I think it will be the first. He sold a few of them, just because he only had one figure — Jonny. Now he's got three, and this show is in April. They claim it's the largest show of modelling in the world.

LOU: *Will you be appearing at that one?*

DOUG: Yes.

LOU: *Sounds cool. Anybody in Louisville who wants to see Doug, now you know where to go.*

DOUG: Oh, yeah. *(Laughter.)* It's a little different. I mean, there are no comic books involved. but the guy really did a wonderful number on it. He's a fine, fine craftsman.

LOU: *Do you remember his name?*

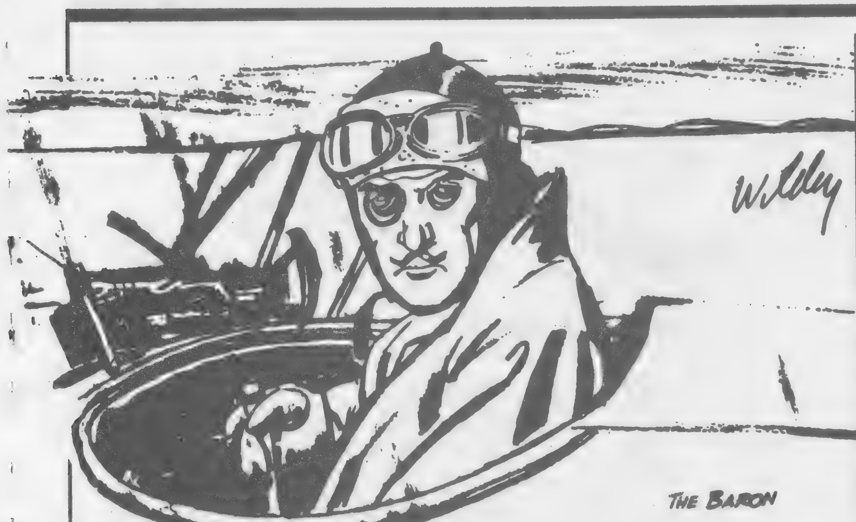
DOUG: The sculptor's name is **Steve West**. The guy in charge of the place is **Matt McWhirt**.

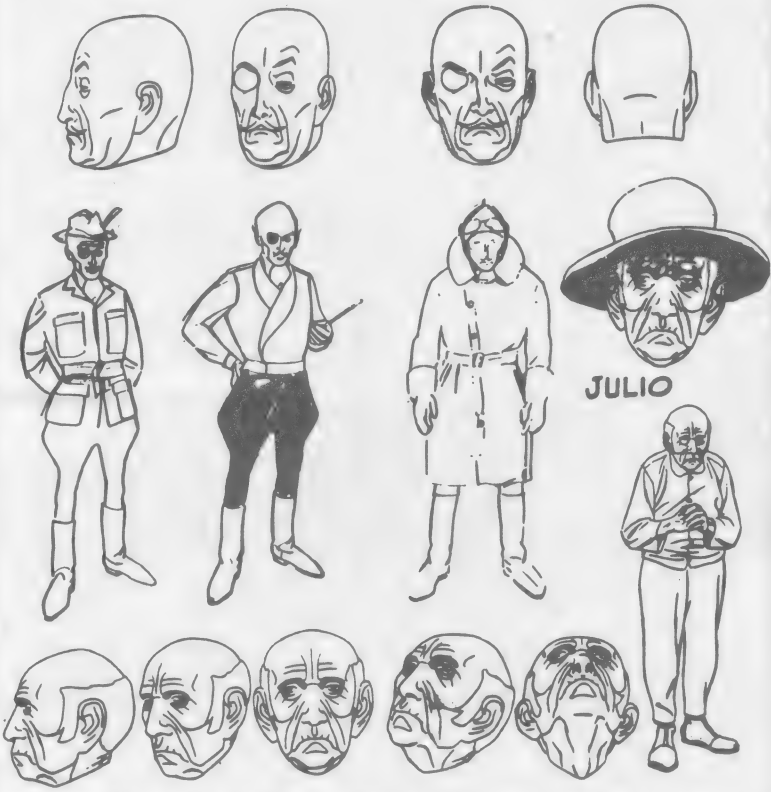
LOU: *Well, if West's first name were Johnny, I think that'd be quite fitting.*

DOUG: Yeah. *(Laughter.)* Also, on RIO, there's a local guy here in town that liked my western artwork, and he's making 18 different T-shirts of it. He seems to have a ounch of outlets around the country for his T-shirts, so he decided to do some westerns. I presume within a couple of weeks I'll be seeing them.

LOU: *Will these be from your paintings, or from RIO?*

"When I first saw JONNY QUEST I didn't like it."





DOUG: Some of them are paintings, but most of them are from RIO. Maybe a couple of incidental numbers there. I have yet to see them, but he's got all these processes. You know, with the color and computerized graphics and all that stuff, which I don't know anything about. But he claims he does, of course. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *That's good. Can you tell me something about your paintings, your western art and such?*

DOUG: Yeah. I've been doing western art for maybe 15 to 20 years. I've had various galleries all around exhibit my work. I've had Biltmore Gallery in Los Angeles, which is the largest of the western galleries. I've had one in Burbank, one in San Francisco, and I finally got this one here. I'm just sticking with one now, this Unique Gallery.

LOU: *Can you tell me if you have any idols in western art, such as Frederic Remington?*

DOUG: Well, I guess when you start with him, you can really stop too. Him and **Charlie Russell** are the two best, in my opinion.

LOU: *Have you seen any of James Bama's western art?*

DOUG: Yes, I have. I've seen his work, and I admire **Mr. Bama** very much. All the western paintings, and I've sold quite a few now, are no real difference from what I've done before. In other words, the paintings have to tell some kind of a story, in much the same way as **Remington** and **Russell** and, I guess, hundreds of other guys, from the standpoint that I don't do just mountains and clouds and stuff like that.

LOU: *Yeah, not just landscape.*

DOUG: I've always gotta have people, gotta have something going on. It's a lot of fun. I like painting.

LOU: *Do you have any pet peeves about comics?*

DOUG: Yeah. There's too much of one thing, not enough experimentation at all. And many of the publishers keep stepping forward and talking about creators' rights and how important they are, which most of the time is garbage. They try like hell to keep whatever they own and perpetrate that, and forget the rest.

I've never really read comics. I know that's strange because I've done them all my life. I read things in the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE or whatever where people get these awards for brilliant writing. But to me, the writing is garbage. *(Laughter.)* I just don't think that too much effort is put into it. With superheroes, you don't have to worry about it. But with other types of stories, you should have more substance, I believe, that what I perceive them as having.

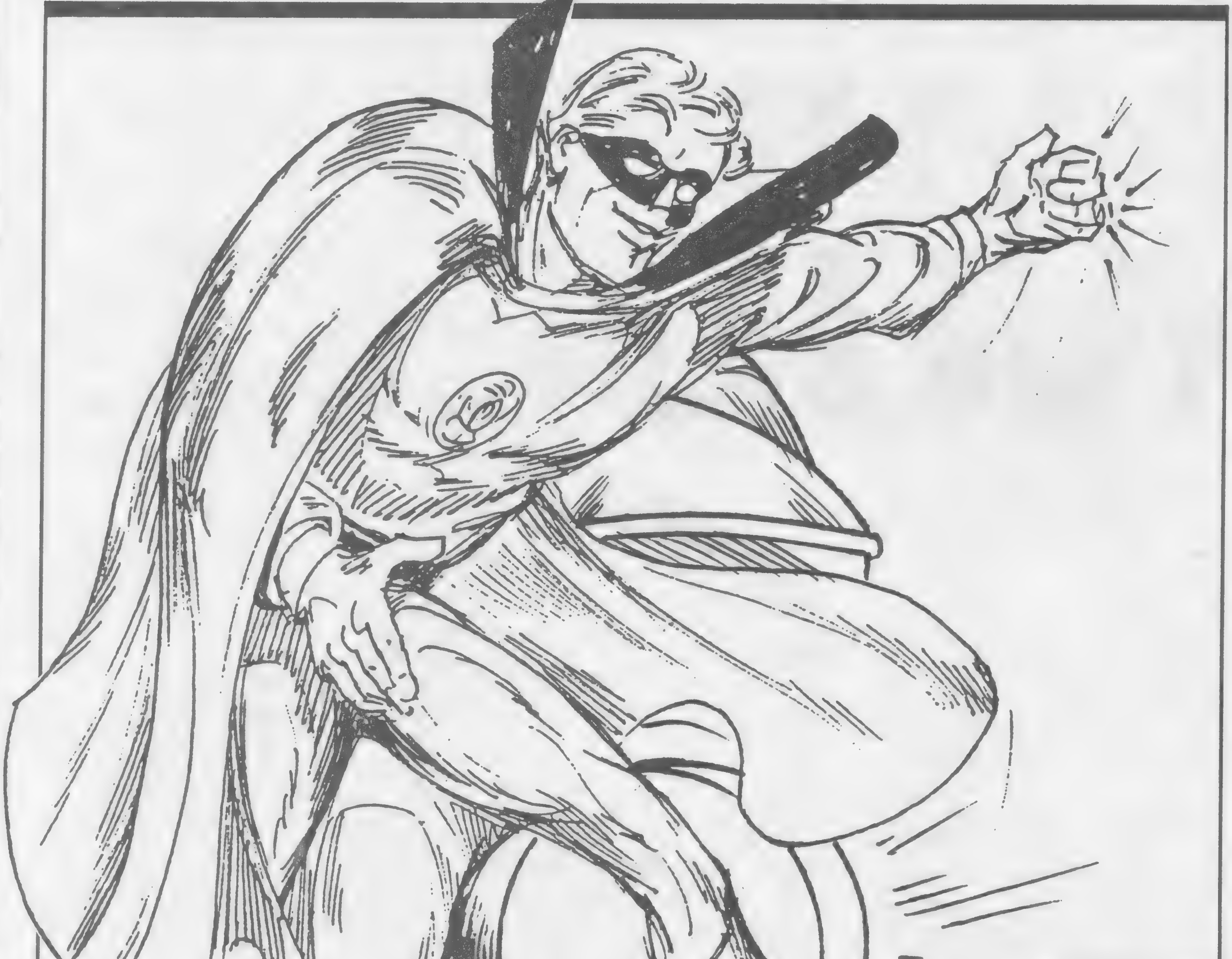
LOU: *So you believe the writing of comics is just too low-level right now?*

DOUG: Yeah.

LOU: *As a closing question, what's been your favorite work in comics or animation or painting so far — your favorite achievement?*

DOUG: Well, I like my comic strip AMBLER very much. It was a terrific amount of work, twelve hours a day, seven days a week. And I always liked it; I thought I did a reasonably good job of it. I've got it all put together now, in case you know somebody who wants to publish AMBLER complete. *(Laughter.)* That, and, I guess, I have to put JONNY QUEST in there someplace. I'm not sure where. Strangely enough, when I saw it the first time, I didn't like it! In retrospect, of course, I liked it.

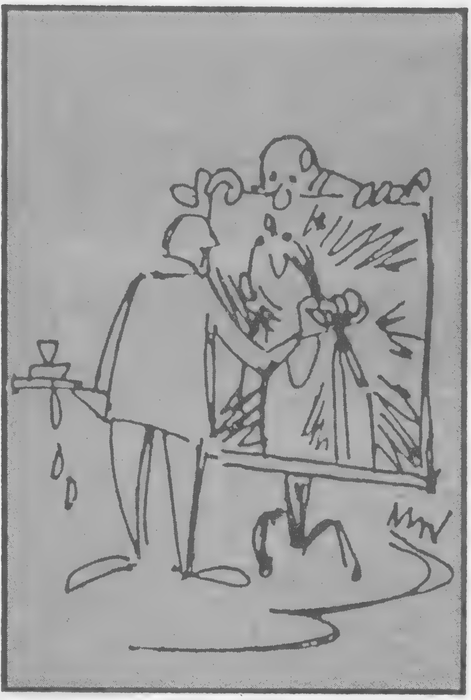
"I came to New York to do advertising. I was too young.


MART NODELL '94
CREATOR OF
GREEN LANTERN
'40

Here's a recent sketch of Green Lantern by our interview subject. Facing page: A self-portrait by same.

All accompanying this interview art TM & ©1995 DC Comics, Inc., unless otherwise noted.

"If I'd do a superhero, they had slack time with printers."



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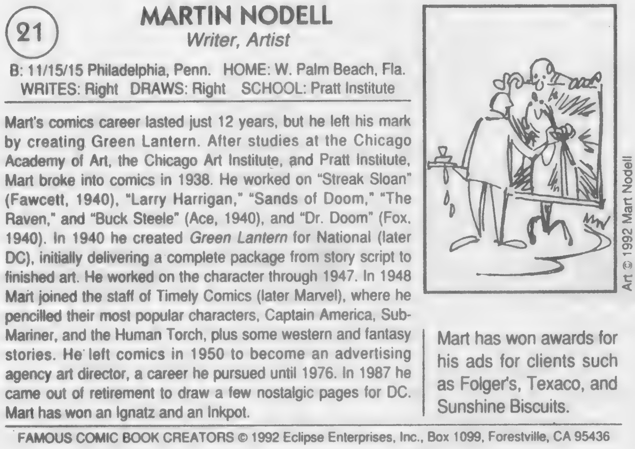
Martin Nodell trading card, part of a series based on history's greatest comic-book creators, published in 1992 by Eclipse Enterprises.



(21) **MARTIN NODELL**
Writer, Artist

B: 11/15/15 Philadelphia, Penn. HOME: W. Palm Beach, Fla.
WRITES: Right DRAWS: Right SCHOOL: Pratt Institute

Mart's comics career lasted just 12 years, but he left his mark by creating Green Lantern. After studies at the Chicago Academy of Art, the Chicago Art Institute, and Pratt Institute, Mart broke into comics in 1938. He worked on "Streak Sloan" (Fawcett, 1940), "Larry Harrigan," "Sands of Doom," "The Raven," and "Buck Steele" (Ace, 1940), and "Dr. Doom" (Fox, 1940). In 1940 he created *Green Lantern* for National (later DC), initially delivering a complete package from story script to finished art. He worked on the character through 1947. In 1948 Mart joined the staff of Timely Comics (later Marvel), where he pencilled their most popular characters, Captain America, Sub-Mariner, and the Human Torch, plus some western and fantasy stories. He left comics in 1950 to become an advertising agency art director, a career he pursued until 1976. In 1987 he came out of retirement to draw a few nostalgic pages for DC. Mart has won an Ignatz and an Inkpot.

Art © 1992 Mart Nodell

Mart has won awards for his ads for clients such as Folger's, Texaco, and Sunshine Biscuits.

FAMOUS COMIC BOOK CREATORS © 1992 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc., Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436

las Fantasy Fair, courtesy of con chairman Larry Lankford and con lieutenant Larry King, and was filmed by Kevin Gould for a segment of the cable access COMIC BOOK SHOW. Whenever they get done editing it, you'll be able to see the video version in the Dallas area.

But you'll be able to read it here first!

LOU MOUGIN: *Okay, Marty, I know all the paying customers want to hear about Green Lantern, but one bit before that. I want to know about yourself, what got you interested in being a comic-book artist, and what got you into your first job — which was for Ace Comics, right?*

MARTIN NODELL: You may know more about this than I do. **Jerry Bails** certainly knows more! *(Laughter.)* As a matter of fact, he sent me a printout years ago. I didn't know I had worked for this Ace, and those others. I'll tell you why this happened. I came from Chicago to New York to do advertising, I thought. I'd go to the advertising agencies, and I had samples and all that. But things were kind of rough, and this is about 1938, and I was actually just a little bit too young for the business. These days, if you're about 20, you're okay. And if you get to be about 38, 35, you're getting too old! But in those days, 38 or 35 was about the right age. But I didn't get any jobs . . . in short, I had to get work. And I saw on the newsstands, they had the triangular wire stands in what were then mom-and-pop candy stores, they had their pulps and magazines on this rack. And I saw comic books! And I thought, "Well, that should be okay." 'Cause for years, even when I was a little kid, I liked the theater. Part of my family was in the theater. And when I got out of high school in Chicago, I worked with theater people there. I enjoyed being on the stage, behind the stage doing scenery, and so on. And in New York, I thought that if I could be on the stage — if not being in the theater — telling a story which seemed to be the most important part of being in comics . . . and in studying them, even then, I saw . . . in 1938 I saw Superman. In 1939, there was Batman. These were the first originations of *real* comics.

But prior to that, I did a few freelance things, and they turned out to be pretty good. And I used them as samples, and after doing one job or another — there would be times when there'd be three! — I'd want to get more work. but there just wasn't any. So it was like doing a job meant earning a few bucks, and then going off looking for another job. Took me a week or two, maybe more, when I wouldn't be earning. And that's all it was, just looking for a job.

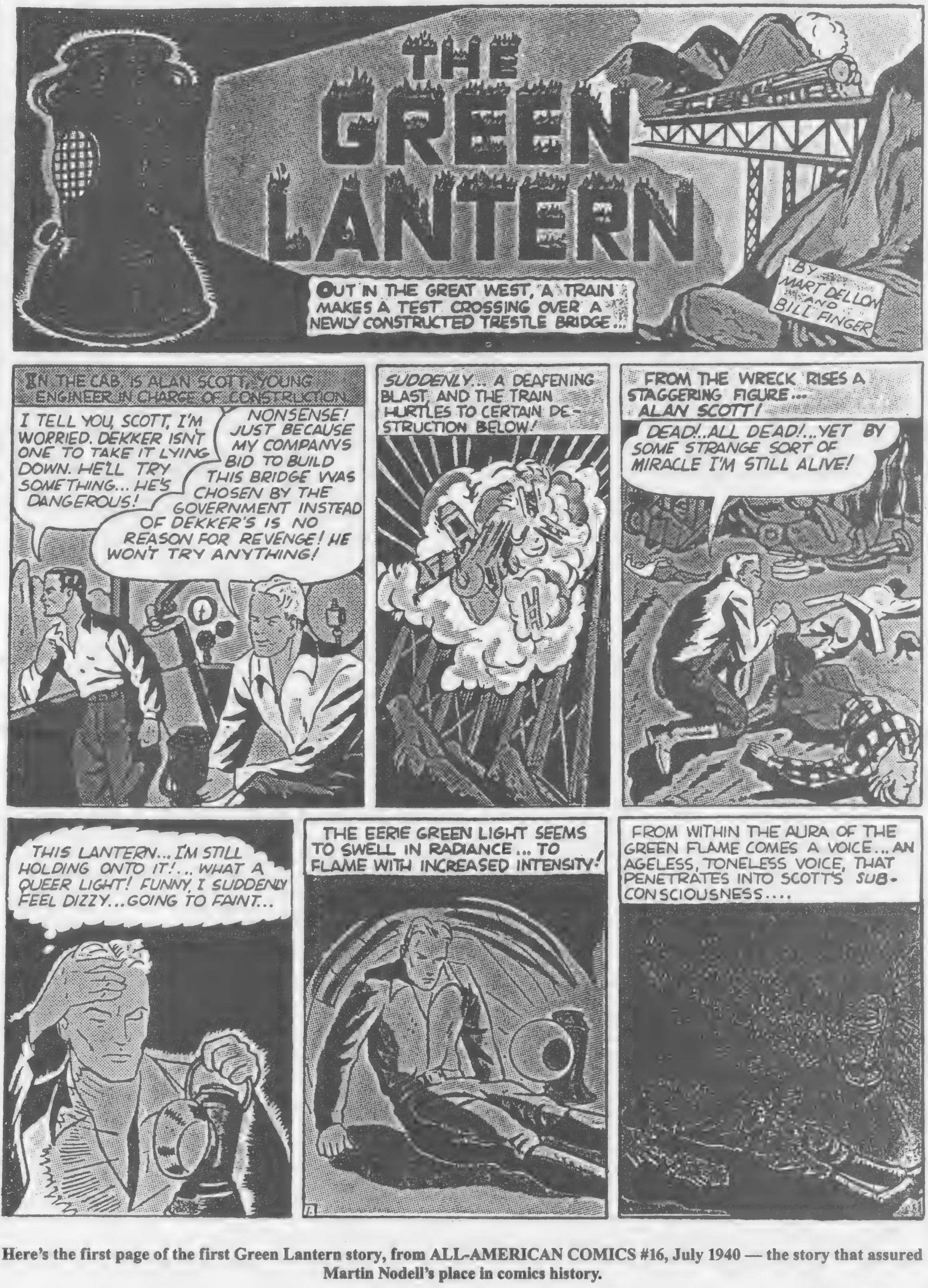
LOU: *Yeah, you really needed a series to get something together.*

MARTIN: I guess I must have told you that before.

LOU: *No, I'm just guessing.*

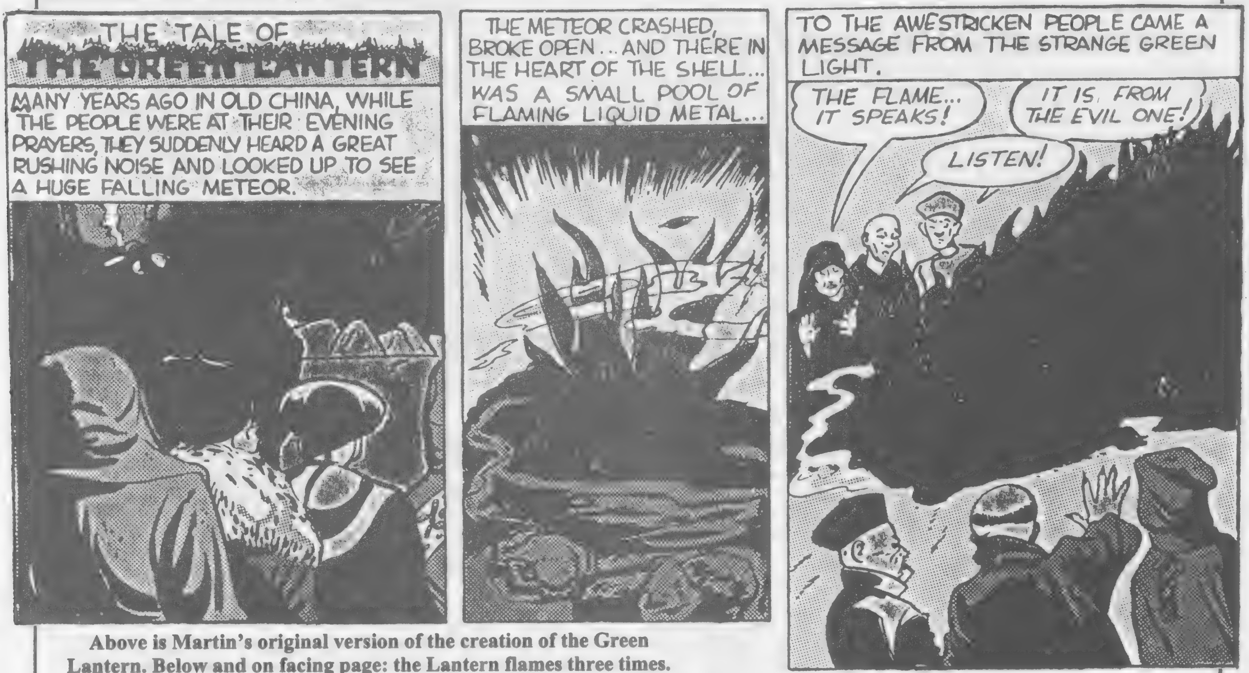
MARTIN: It was more than a good guess. *(Laughter.)* Actually, that was the best thing you could do, get continuity work. So seeing Superman and Batman, I went up to see a chap named **Sheldon Mayer.** And he was the editor of some company or other, and they had a few other company names . . . that was prior to National, which was prior to DC. That all came later. But **Mayer** thought that if I could come up with a good idea in a superhero, they had some slack time with their printers. So he thought, well, he could do something in doing a real good kind of job that would come along. I don't know what that sounded like, or what that really meant. So I left. There was no special encouragement. The point being, if he told that to me, he would tell it to anybody else who came in the door, and certainly tell his friends. So I figured I'd better really work hard on something fast! If I make it, okay; if not, I've tried.

“This green lantern thing, to me it just meant ‘go.’”


THE GREEN LANTERN
OUT IN THE GREAT WEST, A TRAIN MAKES A TEST CROSSING OVER A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED TRESTLE BRIDGE...
BY MART DELLON AND BILL FINGER
IN THE CAB, IS ALAN SCOTT, YOUNG ENGINEER IN CHARGE OF CONSTRUCTION
I TELL YOU, SCOTT, I'M WORRIED. DEKKER ISN'T ONE TO TAKE IT LYING DOWN. HE'LL TRY SOMETHING... HE'S DANGEROUS!
NONSENSE! JUST BECAUSE MY COMPANYS BID TO BUILD THIS BRIDGE WAS CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT INSTEAD OF DEKKER'S IS NO REASON FOR REVENGE! HE WON'T TRY ANYTHING!
SUDDENLY... A DEAFENING BLAST AND THE TRAIN HURTLES TO CERTAIN DESTRUCTION BELOW!
FROM THE WRECK RISES A STAGGERING FIGURE... ALAN SCOTT!
DEAD!..ALL DEAD!...YET BY SOME STRANGE SORT OF MIRACLE I'M STILL ALIVE!
THIS LANTERN... I'M STILL HOLDING ONTO IT!... WHAT A QUEER LIGHT! FUNNY, I SUDDENLY FEEL DIZZY...GOING TO FAINT...
THE EERIE GREEN LIGHT SEEMS TO SWELL IN RADIANCE ... TO FLAME WITH INCREASED INTENSITY!
FROM WITHIN THE AURA OF THE GREEN FLAME COMES A VOICE...AN AGELESS, TONELESS VOICE, THAT PENETRATES INTO SCOTT'S SUBCONSCIOUSNESS....

Here's the first page of the first Green Lantern story, from ALL-AMERICAN COMICS #16, July 1940 — the story that assured Martin Nodell's place in comics history.

"The thought, 'will power,' came to me, as opposed to


THE TALE OF THE GREEN LANTERN
MANY YEARS AGO IN OLD CHINA, WHILE THE PEOPLE WERE AT THEIR EVENING PRAYERS, THEY SUDDENLY HEARD A GREAT RUSHING NOISE AND LOOKED UP TO SEE A HUGE FALLING METEOR.
THE METEOR CRASHED, BROKE OPEN... AND THERE IN THE HEART OF THE SHELL... WAS A SMALL POOL OF FLAMING LIQUID METAL...
TO THE AWESTRICKEN PEOPLE CAME A MESSAGE FROM THE STRANGE GREEN LIGHT.
THE FLAME... IT SPEAKS!
IT IS FROM THE EVIL ONE!
LISTEN!

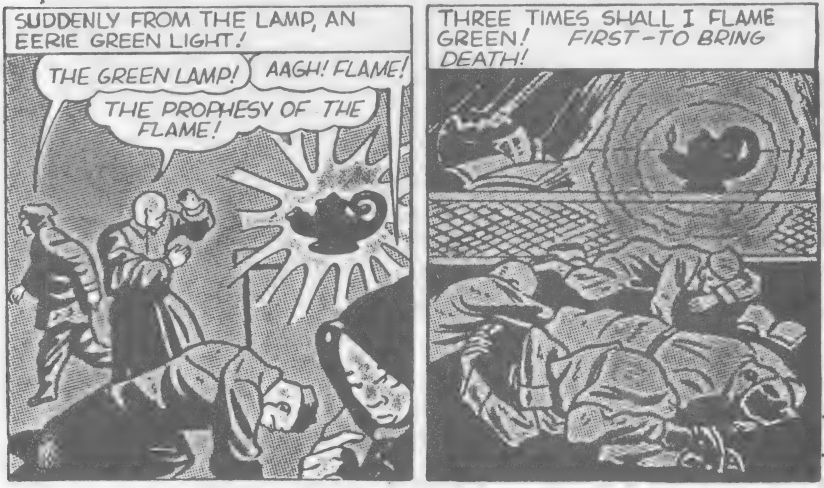
Above is Martin's original version of the creation of the Green Lantern. Below and on facing page: the Lantern flames three times.

So on my way home — should I tell the rest of this story?
LOU: *Do it!*
MARTIN: Okay, fine. *(Looks up at the monitor)* Oh, look, who's in the mirror?
LOU: *Us.*
MARTIN: Is my hair combed? *(Laughter.) (To Lou:)* You look fine.
LOU: *Now you know why I wear a hat.*
MARTIN: You don't have to use a brush, do you?
LOU: *Not as much as I used to.* (Laughter.)
MARTIN: Well, then, use a towel. They have good towels here. Anyway — sorry about that! I was interested in Chinese folklore, in Greek mythology. And these things I liked, I wanted to apply to some creative effort. I felt there could be something to that. So I just wrote down a variety of different things on notepaper on my way home. By the way, in those days you had to be living near a publisher. In other words, you couldn't send things to a publisher from California, or St. Louis, or Texas, mainly because there were no fax. You just had to work very fast and come in — there was no money allowance for anything like that. And there was no overnight delivery, no Federal Express. And we've gotten to know those things very well in recent years, believe me. That's another story, too.

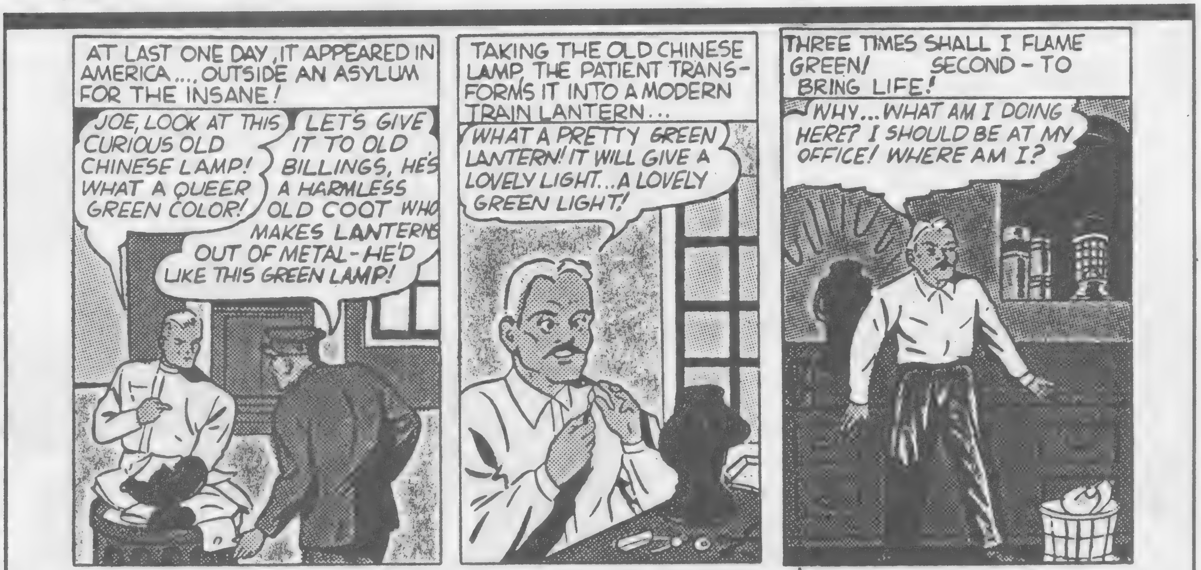
However — I did make a variety of notes and went down to the subway. The publisher's in New York, Manhattan. I lived in Brooklyn. But in going down to the subway station, there was this train man in the trough . . . in those days, they inspected tracks manually. He was waving a red lantern for a train to stay out of the station. You could see the light of the station in the distance. Lots of people were backing and waiting for their train to come in, and so on. So this is where it became noticeable, I'm pretty sure. Pretty soon, he was waving a green lantern, hid behind a post. Train pulled in, doors opened, and a little old lady pushed me into a seat, which was very nice of her, because I didn't give it back to her! *(Laughter.)* I had different plans!

This green lantern thing, to me it just meant "go." That was something. So I wrote, "Green Lantern." And as I went on in that three-quarters-of-an-hour ride, I wrote that it seemed to me that the thought of green meant "go." And maybe that would mean something that I could use. And the thought, "will power," came to me, as opposed to, oh, kryptonite, or mechanical things that Batman used, and so on. So by the time that I got home, I used "Green Lantern" as a working title. It seemed to come to my mind as the most important thing. And there was no other title that could even simulate something like that.

So I made a good number of notes. And I thought of the green lantern and the costumed figure. And the lantern itself would be what he would carry around, maybe defining "honesty" or whatever.
LOU: *Like Diogenes.*
MARTIN: That's right! Because I had read a little bit of ancient history, and I'd liked it . . .
LOU: *Diogenes was a man who went around with a lantern looking for an*


SUDDENLY FROM THE LAMP, AN EERIE GREEN LIGHT!
THE GREEN LAMP!
AAGH! FLAME!
THE PROPHESY OF THE FLAME!
THREE TIMES SHALL I FLAME GREEN! FIRST—TO BRING DEATH!

kryptonite, or mechanical things that Batman used."


AT LAST ONE DAY, IT APPEARED IN AMERICA.... OUTSIDE AN ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE!
JOE, LOOK AT THIS CURIOUS OLD CHINESE LAMP! WHAT A QUEER GREEN COLOR!
LET'S GIVE IT TO OLD BILLINGS, HE'S A HARMLESS OLD COOT WHO MAKES LANTERNS OUT OF METAL-HE'D LIKE THIS GREEN LAMP!
TAKING THE OLD CHINESE LAMP THE PATIENT TRANSFORMS IT INTO A MODERN TRAIN LANTERN...
WHAT A PRETTY GREEN LANTERN! IT WILL GIVE A LOVELY LIGHT...A LOVELY GREEN LIGHT!
THREE TIMES SHALL I FLAME GREEN! SECOND - TO BRING LIFE!
WHY...WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I SHOULD BE AT MY OFFICE! WHERE AM I?

honest man. I don't think he ever found one.

MARTIN: I guess not. And neither did I. *(Laughter.)* Even when I shined it at me! But the thing was, the lantern became too cumbersome to use, even as an idea. So I thought, there was something else that I liked, which stuck in my mind. I liked Wagnerian opera. And that brought the thought of the operas — GOTTERDAMMERUNG, and the RING CYCLE, the operas, in short, which **Wagner** wrote about a young hero —

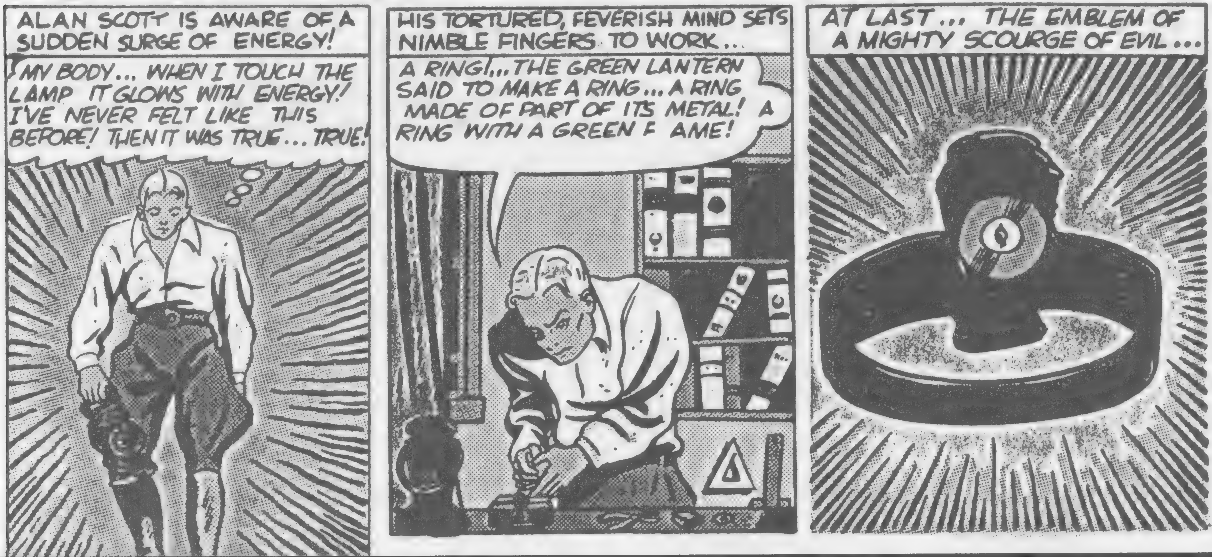
LOU: *Siegfried?*

MARTIN: Siegfried, and a beautiful young damsel. But a ring went through the hands of very bad, notorious people, to people in between, to kings, emperors, and so on, through a lot of different sources. And it came back to Siegfried and his girlfriend, and they lived happily ever after. So I thought — and I'm not going to sing any part of the opera, so don't worry about it *(laughter)* — so I thought that maybe I could use a ring idea. And as I began to develop this, I thought that with the ring coming from part of the lantern, which was made from part of a meteor which came down in this small Chinese town. That's where I got the Chinese folklore bit into it. I developed that, the ring idea, and most importantly — and this is most important for any young people who come to see me about, "I'm going to be a comics artist, and do a bang-up job and all that, and the way I can do this is to draw like **Rob Liefeld.**" *(Laughter.)* And maybe he could. *(Laughter.)* But then again, on the other hand, maybe he could do a **Todd McFarlane.** But I tell them, "No. If they want a **Todd McFarlane,** they'd just get **Todd McFarlane** to do it." They don't need any copies. So draw like yourself, think the way you want to think, think of what you can do, and just do it. That's the most important thing. But the *most* important thing is to *tell a story well.* Tell a story. And if they can tell a story well — and usually, what they show me are little disconnected drawings. Some are pretty good, and we've seen some young fellows from 15 or 16 on up around the country who could do one good job. They need experience, and they need to work out of it and develop.

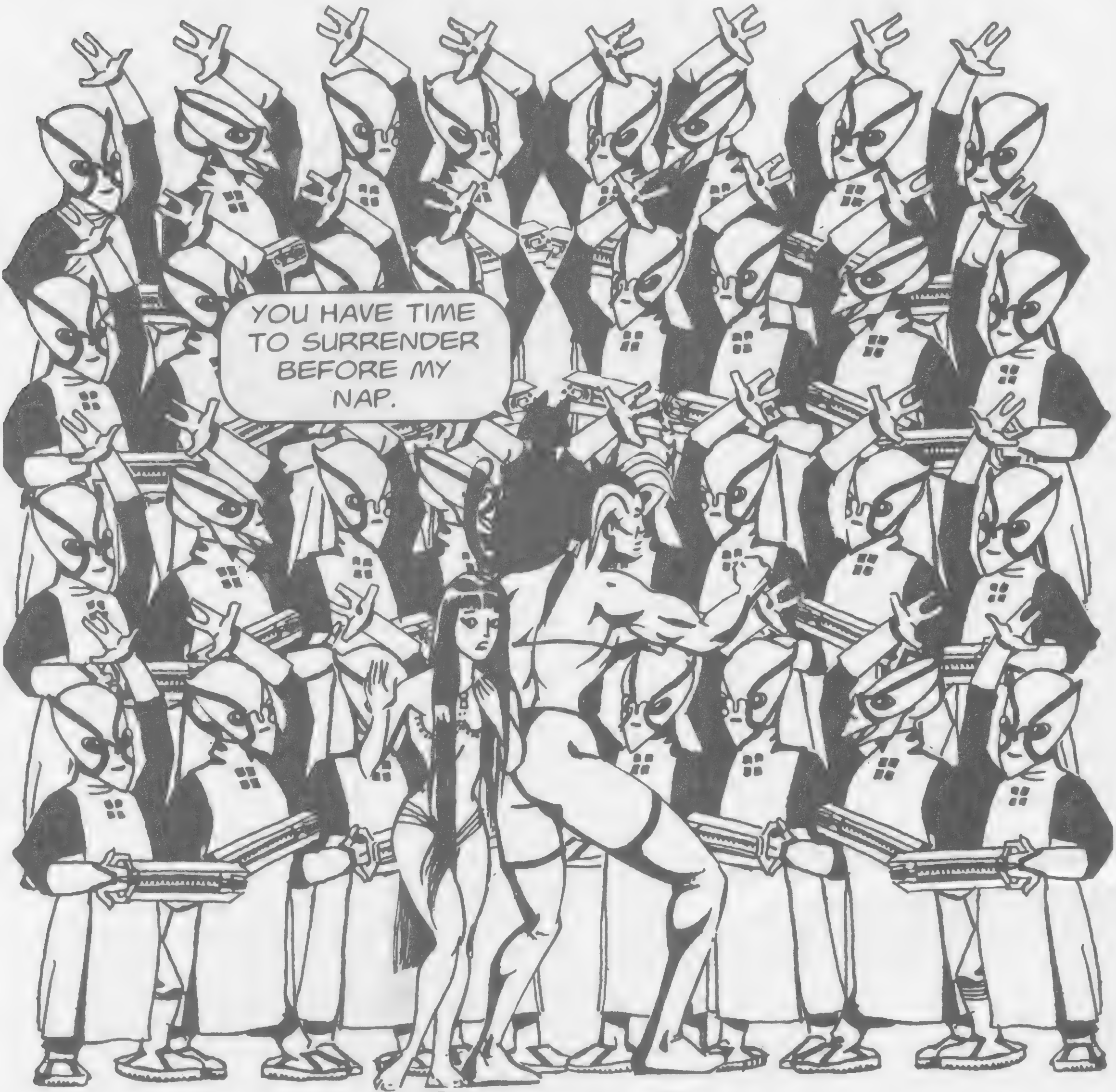
But anyway, I went on from there to develop a character who is sort of wearing a Greek-type costume —

LOU: *Especially the sandals.*

MARTIN: But I wanted a flair to the shirt, which has been eliminated more times than once. I added color to it, and all that. So I made samples of this character and its design, I did three pages of art . . . And another thing, I'll just be breaking into it as I tell it to you, what I experienced. The times, in those days, prior to World War II and later while World War II was happening, things were generally not doing very well economically, and various other things were not terribly successful. I have to get into this. You know what? I've gotta cut — I hear a wife! *(Laughter.)* Carrie, come in and sit


ALAN SCOTT IS AWARE OF A SUDDEN SURGE OF ENERGY!
MY BODY... WHEN I TOUCH THE LAMP IT GLOWS WITH ENERGY! I'VE NEVER FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE! THEN IT WAS TRUE... TRUE!
HIS TORTURED, FEVERISH MIND SETS NIMBLE FINGERS TO WORK...
A RING!...THE GREEN LANTERN SAID TO MAKE A RING... A RING MADE OF PART OF ITS METAL! A RING WITH A GREEN F AME!
AT LAST... THE EMBLEM OF A MIGHTY SCOURGE OF EVIL...

We the Denebian Unity vow by the storms of winter to destroy Captain Fortune! *Our Will!*


YOU HAVE TIME TO SURRENDER BEFORE MY NAP.

CAPTAIN FORTUNE

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"I thought of him as one who would will himself into things."

down, and I'll tell you about where I am. I'm sorry I couldn't get back; I had to take care of things.

(Carrie Nodell appears and takes her place on the panel.)

CARRIE NODELL: Thank you. You look so handsome today!

MARTIN: Oh, everybody looks handsome. You wouldn't say otherwise. Just because she knows 'em! *(Laughter.)* Now, I was putting together all the work I had for **Sheldon Mayer.** And people at that time were earning about 35 bucks a week, which was a pretty good salary for anybody who was a tailor, a banker, or whatever.

LOU: *It was the tail end of the Depression.*

MARTIN: Yeah, but it was *in* the Depression. The NEW YORK TIMES was two cents, a subway ride was a nickel, and a dozen of eggs was about 35 cents. Can't get that much anymore today. Even chickens, they get more today! *(Laughter.)* Bread was ten cents a loaf, all that. So when I was getting ten dollars a page, finished — I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

LOU: *You were doing well. This was $10 for the whole thing, pencilling, inking, lettering and everything, right?*

CARRIE: And delivery by me. *(Laughter.)*

MARTIN: Okay, that is correct. I put together some other storyline, about three pages. I wrote a few pages of concept of what I thought the character would do. And thinking in terms of the character, I thought of him as someone who would will himself into doing things. And he didn't have all the extra things I mentioned before. But I elaborated on it, and I wish that I had some of that material today, which I don't have. I put away a lot of things, but nothing of real value or consequence, as I found out years later. 'Cause I didn't think in terms of memorabilia then. And even the first drawings I had made, sketches of Green Lantern, I didn't have any of that. I didn't have any of the earlier things I had done, even prior to Green Lantern. And I don't have any of the Green Lantern things either.

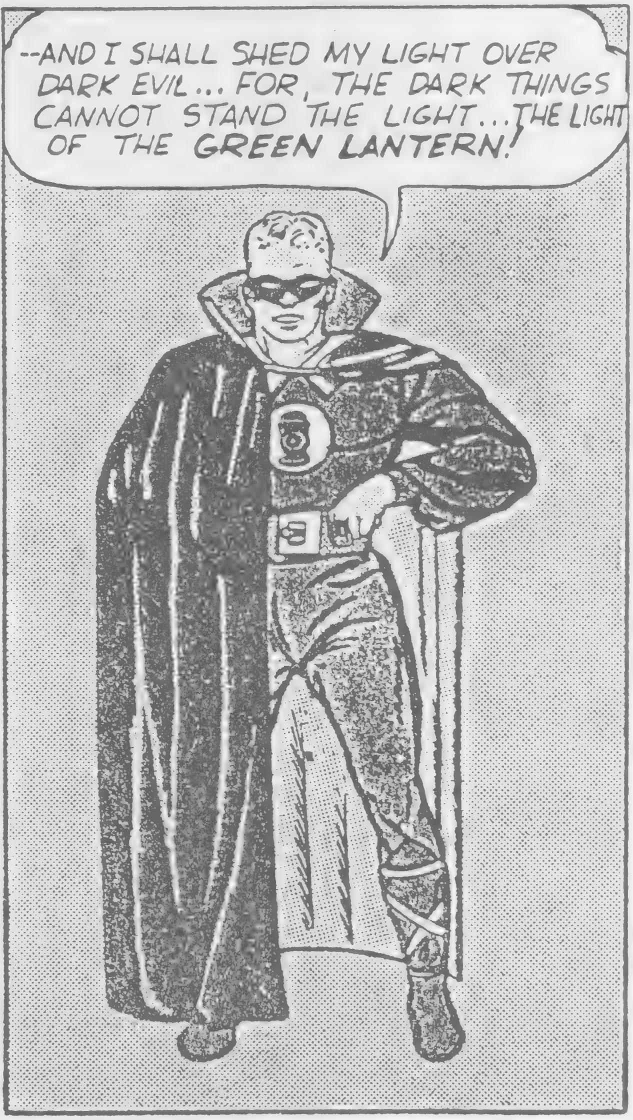
LOU: *Well, basically, when you conceived Green Lantern, got the concept and presentation working, I assume you brought it in to Shelly Mayer and from then it went on to scripter Bill Finger?*

CARRIE: No, to **Maxie Gaines.**

LOU: *To Maxie Gaines. Go ahead, I'm sorry.*

MARTIN: I brought it to **Mayer.** Sheldon wasn't terribly enthusiastic. He said, "Just leave it." — But that was good enough. He didn't say, "We'll see, and you can take it back," or whatever. So I left it.

Here's the final panel of that first Green Lantern story — the one in which GL first recites what would become a familiar oath. (The even-more-familiar version was still several years off.)


--AND I SHALL SHED MY LIGHT OVER DARK EVIL... FOR, THE DARK THINGS CANNOT STAND THE LIGHT...THE LIGHT OF THE GREEN LANTERN!

Now, I want to break into something about **Sheldon Mayer.** More people ask me about Shelly. To me, he was a delight. Other people have told me a lot of negative things about him. Like, for example, he would get mad at someone, and would not like what they'd present, he'd hang up the art . . . we worked 16x20 inches in those days, so that's a third larger than the sizes now. So he'd hang it up to the wall, and throw a dart at it. *(Laughter.)* And wherever the dart would land, it would have to be redone.

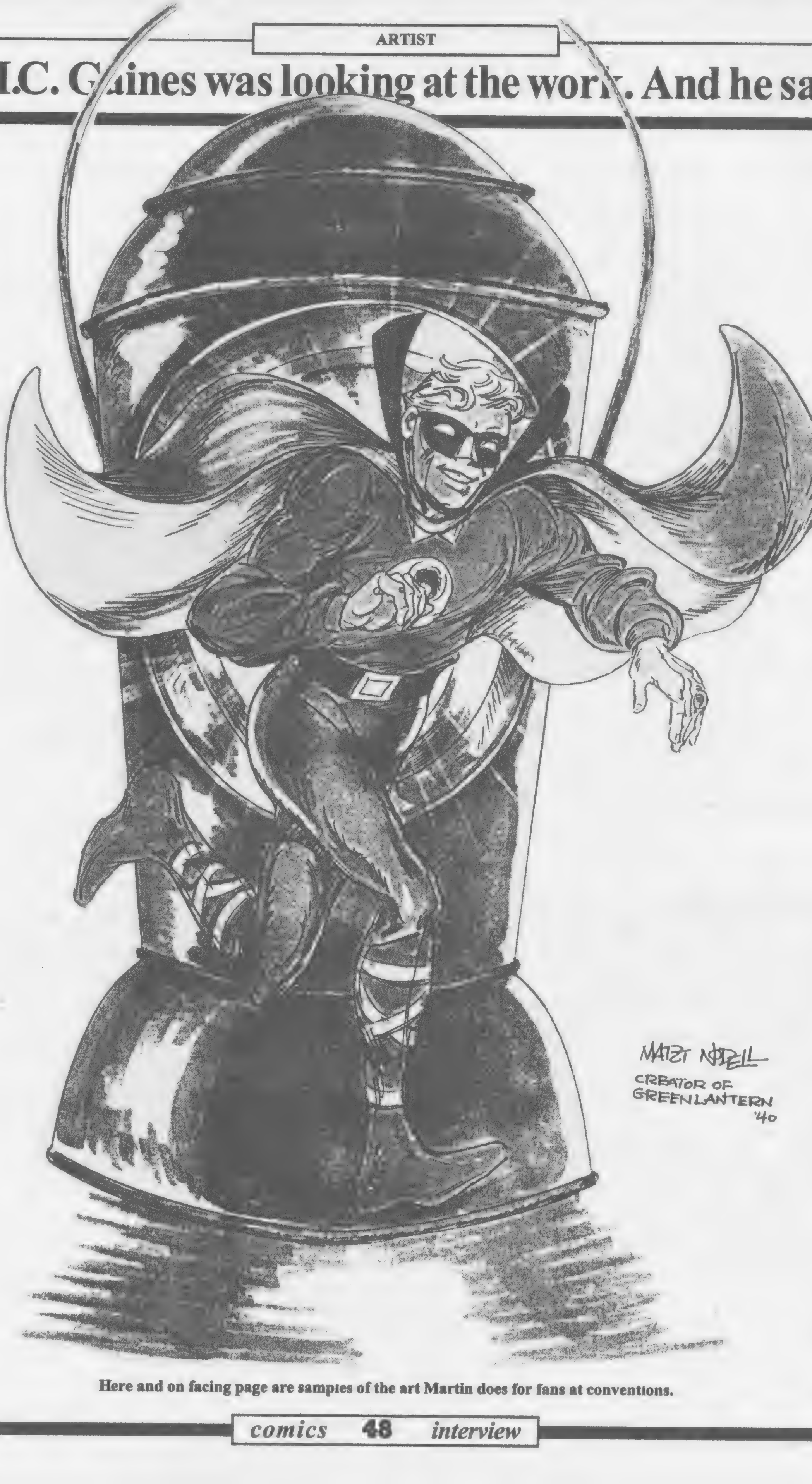
CARRIE: Boy, he'd rip up pages!

MARTIN: No, not full pages. He'd tear out pieces — say that he didn't like panel three. *(Laughter.)* He'd dig in . . .

CARRIE: He never did that to Marty. Maybe because I delivered it. *(Laughter.)* Marty wasn't there, so . . .

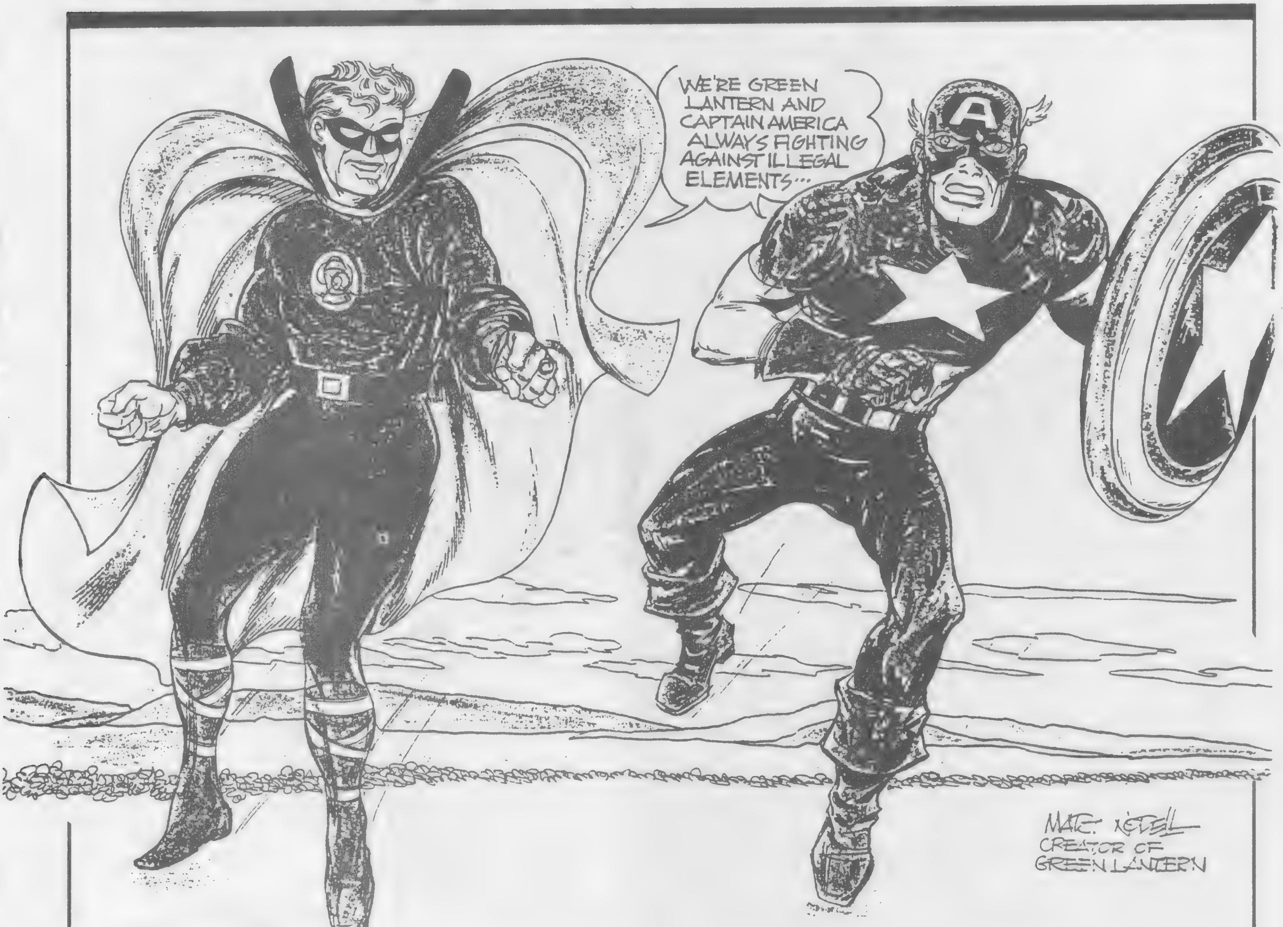
MARTIN: The thing is, when Mayer would accept my stuff, it would be on deadline. I was never late. But I sometimes would have to work anywhere between 10, 15, 20 hours at the last stretch, trying to keep it as even and good-looking as possible, and that's when Carrie'd deliver it and I'd try to get in a couple of hours of sleep.

“M.C. Gaines was looking at the work. And he said,


MATT NODELL
CREATOR OF
GREEN LANTERN
'40

Here and on facing page are samples of the art Martin does for fans at conventions.

‘I like it!’ He paused, then said, ‘Get to work!’”


WE'RE GREEN LANTERN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA ALWAYS FIGHTING AGAINST ILLEGAL ELEMENTS...
MART NODELL
CREATOR OF
GREEN LANTERN

But having left the work with him, I was a little anxious, that's very true. I was also very young. I waited about four days, and I called **Mayer.** And he said, “Well, wait and see. I'll call you.” That didn't sound terribly good. That was it, I thought, laying it aside. So a few days later, almost a week and a half after I'd given the Green Lantern proposal to him, I called him again. And he said, “Well, come in. **Mr. Gaines** wants to see you.”

By the way, **M.C. Gaines,** if any of you don't know, was the father of **Bill Gaines,** who eventually created MAD. Well, *he* didn't create it; he had a good gang of guys with him. So Bill was a pretty smart cookie himself, very much so. Anyway, I came rushing right in. He ushered me into **M.C. Gaines'** office, and he closed the door behind me. I went, “Uh-oh,” because I had heard, “M.C. **Gaines** is an awfully nice person,” and if he was nice, he was probably going to put me down easy, because he sees I have done a lot of work on this. And I did some outlines for future story ideas, so I gave him a full package. And when **Mayer** went up, there was a few minutes of silence. And then M.C. was looking at the work. And then he said, “I like it!”

CARRIE: “You're in!”

MARTIN: No, no, no, no. He didn't say *that* at all! You weren't even there; you didn't know me at the time.

CARRIE: No, I didn't know you then, come to think of it.

MARTIN: He didn't say anything like that. He just paused again, for a while, and then said, “Get to work!” *(Laughter.)* Yeah, that was it! *(Laughter.)* I remember that vividly.

I can tell all kinds of stories from about 1950, when I got out of comics, and got into advertising. And I stayed with advertising until 1975. I slowly got back into comics through friends of ours who are in the comics business.

But at that point, in answer to what you were saying, I started to make some changes which **Mayer** wanted. The most important change he had made was to think of the costume as being a little more colorful. He said, “Don't put too many blacks into the cape. We'll do it in lavender.” So he's the one who added color, actually. I was going to refuse color, and make it more green, actually. He said, “No, keep it vivid.” So I thought that was very good.

Anyhow, I did not make many kinds of changes on the initial three pages, and I started to make a few more . . . **Bill Finger** was called in and he wrote the rest of it, excepting for I guess the last two pages, which I did. But I wrote that with him, as I remember.

And another thing of importance is the oath. The presentation I made, thinking of Green Lantern as a human character, and having human frailties and faults, I thought he would have will power to do what he is going to do to help the force of good in the world and so on. He would do the good things through what he would will. He would not actually be able to go through a wall, but he would really convince the other guys, the bad guys, that he did. In other words, it's all by will power. So he ended up going through walls.

It was asked of me, “Who thought up the idea of his being vulnerable to wood?” It was not me. And for this reason: I did not think that it was a good idea, if he was willing himself to go through walls, be

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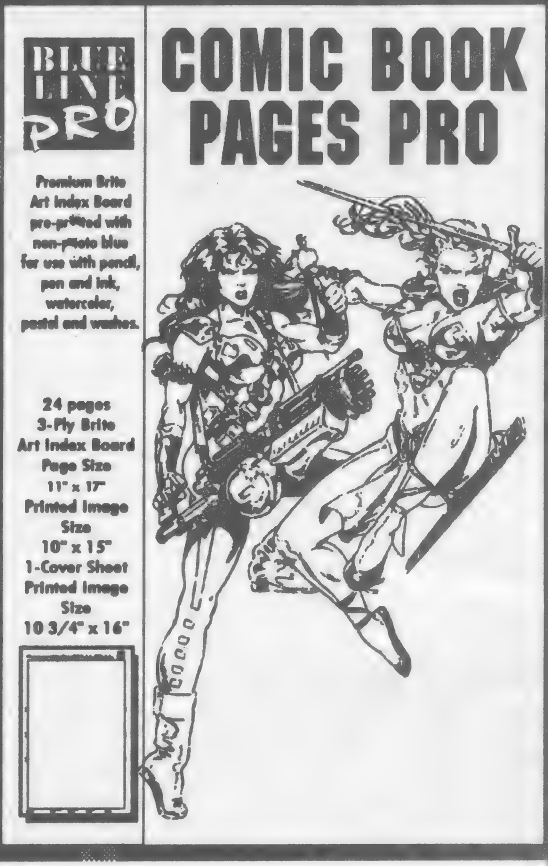

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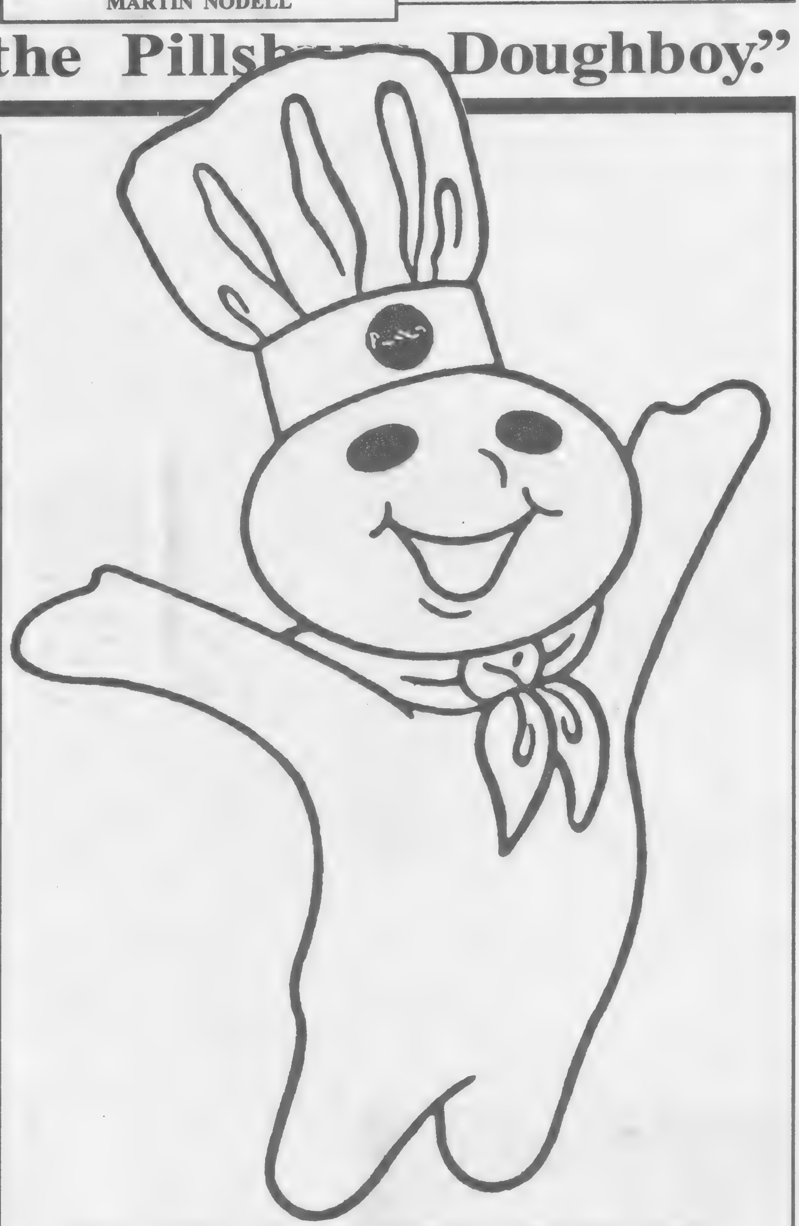
“I created the Pillsbury Doughboy.”



Martin has created one character even better known than Green Lantern . . .

cause there are studs, I think, every so often in the walls . . . *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *Oh, yeah, he'd have to go through sideways!*

MARTIN: Yeah, and I didn't *draw* him sideways, either! *(Laughter.)* How the heck is he gonna go through *that?* Also, if he does happen to get through that, how's about some beams that were crosswise? The guy said, “No. Beat it.” He and a few other people said, “Don't be concerned about that. No one will ever think about that, excepting you.” *(Laughter.)* So it became that, early on.

And as far as yellow is concerned, I think they're still using that as a weakness for the modern GL's rings. Maybe they are, and maybe they're not. I don't know. The yellow came in later on. There was discussion, I think, about yellow early on. Maybe you know all about it, all you guys.

LOU: *That was the '60s Green Lantern. He had the yellow weakness.*

MARTIN: Because I didn't have anything like that that I knew about. A weakness of color.

WELDON ADAMS (DC STAFFER): They wanted to make sure he had a weakness that was different, to differentiate between the Golden and Silver Age Green Lanterns.

LOU: *Right.*

MARTIN: So that was brought in during the Silver Age. I was out of it by then.

CARRIE: You were not. You were doing the Pillsbury Boy.

MARTIN: You don't give that away! *(Laughter.)* No, I have worked for a lot of ad agencies, a lot of the big ones. By the way, a lot of my accounts were Kellogg's, Stouffer's, Sara Lee, Proctor & Gamble, Pillsbury . . .

LOU: *Was Texaco one of them?*

MARTIN: I did Texaco for another agency. I won awards on a number of TV commercials.

LOU: *Did you have an association with the TEXACO STAR THEATRE, or am I wrong about that?*

MARTIN: No. It was about that time, but not necessarily with the THEATRE itself.

LOU: *Okay.*

MARTIN: But I did commercials they used, and our agency was Cunningham and Walsh. Anyway, the Pillsbury Doughboy was something I was art director on. And at ad agencies, you don't really work alone. If you try to make a presentation, it's skipped aside, because there's always politics. You can't do that, because the guy you got to show it to is above you. And if he is above you in status, you can't very well discuss that without having a group around you. So usually these are group things.

So I created the design of a Pillsbury Doughboy. And I worked on that a good bit. And so, I was the art director on Pillsbury, not thinking that *that* would last more than a couple of years, which — *(Laughter.)*

CARRIE: It kept going. That and the Eveready battery.

MARTIN: And the tiger in the tank, the, um, gas, I thought it'd never last that long.

LOU: *Exxon.*

MARTIN: And yet, that lasted a pretty good five years. That was unusual.

CARRIE: He was the guy who did them.

MARTIN: And for myself, I never expected Green Lantern to go on, or the Pillsbury Doughboy. You never get credit for anything in advertising, anyway. They do help you along so that you do better in the agency.

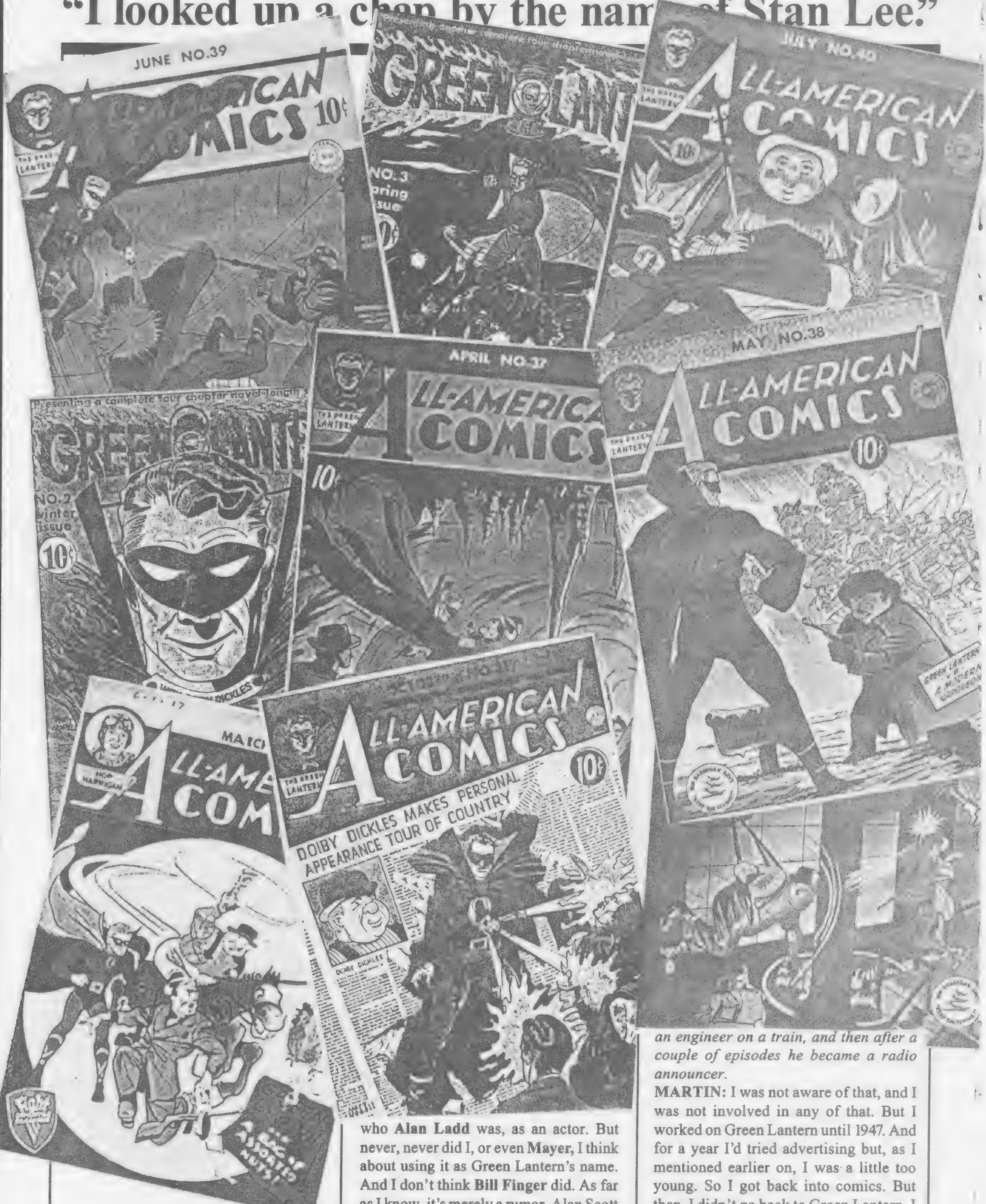
CARRIE: You got an art director's award for Sunshine Biscuits.

MARTIN: That was also good, too. As good as the last biscuit. *(Laughter.)* Which I ate! So, you want to follow up from here?

LOU: *Yeah, I want to follow through on the Green Lantern stuff. Okay, the story about Alan Ladd originally being the idea for Green Lantern's alter ego's name. Was “Alan Ladd” your idea, or somebody else's?*

MARTIN: No. As far as I'm concerned, I had never heard about it. I began to hear about this, as I've mentioned, after I got back into comics around '75. I began to hear about “Alan Ladd.” Well, I knew

“I looked up a chap by the nam of Stan Lee.”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A BAG OF ASSORTED NUTS!

Here are a few of the covers Martin did for DC during the 1940s, his most active period in comics.

who **Alan Ladd** was, as an actor. But never, never did I, or even **Mayer,** I think about using it as Green Lantern's name. And I don't think **Bill Finger** did. As far as I know, it's merely a rumor. Alan Scott was the only name that did thread right through everything we did.

LOU: *I know you had him starting out as an engineer on a train, and then after a couple of episodes he became a radio announcer.*

MARTIN: I was not aware of that, and I was not involved in any of that. But I worked on Green Lantern until 1947. And for a year I'd tried advertising but, as I mentioned earlier on, I was a little too young. So I got back into comics. But then, I didn't go back to Green Lantern. I looked up a chap by the name of **Stan Lee.** And he worked for his uncle, **Martin Goodman,** who had named the com-

“We'd never know who did exactly what.”

pany Timely. They used to say about **Martin Goodman,** “He could never make a living.” Early on, he actually did sell shoelaces on street corners. *(Laughter.)* That meant, it was part of the Depression; he did not sell apples on the corner but he did have bad times. So when he was in comics, and he worked with Stan, I think Stan was doing an admirable job. Some people say that there's a lot of stuff he had conned from other people. I never knew about that, but working on staff, it was fun, for the two years I worked with him. And I worked for him until 1950. But he had his staff in the Empire State Building in New York. And it was a huge room, and it was almost like a bullpen. And the people we had there were **Syd Shores,** who did most of the Captain America stories . . . this is well after **Kirby.** I know very little about that. And I didn't know **Joe Simon** at all. So I didn't know about them. But there was **Johnny Buscema,** who did a lot of varieties of things; his art was always very, very good. He was a penciller; I was a penciller. I did most of the Human Torch, Sub-Mariner . . .

LOU: *You did the Human Torch? I'll be dogged!*

MARTIN: . . . And a lot of the westerns. And a lot of the time, I'd fill in for Syd when he was busy, doing CAPTAIN AMERICA.

LOU: *This is, like, in the late '40s or so?*

MARTIN: Between '48 and '50. And **Gene Colan** was on staff. He did a lot of the same things, but I think there were some other characters they had up there at the time —

CARRIE: Danny DeCarlo . . .

MARTIN: And **Dan DeCarlo,** he was doing the girlie things . . .

LOU: *Right, he's doing ARCHIE now. MY GIRL PEARL, and all that . . .*

MARTIN: And he was good. There was a fellow named **Al Pross,** and I don't know what happened to him. He did a lot of the western things, but he was very, very good. He did pencils. He did girlie stuff, too, helping **Dan DeCarlo.** What I'm getting at is, this was kind of like a crossover. I was doing a number of things, the other guys were doing a number of things, and I don't know if any of them, excepting for maybe **Gene Colan,** would know what work he did at that time. Gene was more of a stylist, and his work could be recognized. But we had about four inkers. And say, if a job had to be hurried, maybe two or three inkers would get one ten-page story, pencilled by maybe one man. And it would *kinda* look the same, but hurried. And by the next day, we'd never know who did exactly what. So people have asked me a number of times, “What was *your* work in Timely?” I could never, never point to it and know which it was. A number of reasons why come to mind. There were times when somebody from Stan's office would come in and say, “We've got a rush job! There's a ten-page story, script all typed out. Two pages to you, two pages to you, two pages to you, two pages to you, two pages to you.” So all five of the pencillers are working on two pages apiece. At the end of the day, that was done. On the following day, it was distributed to different inkers. I didn't know what I did, and the inkers didn't know what they did. *(Laughter.)*

CARRIE: I think **Jerry Bails** is the only one who's been able to identify some of the work.

MARTIN: Some of the work. Not all of it.

LOU: *It must've been kind of a shop situation, back then.*

MARTIN: Right.

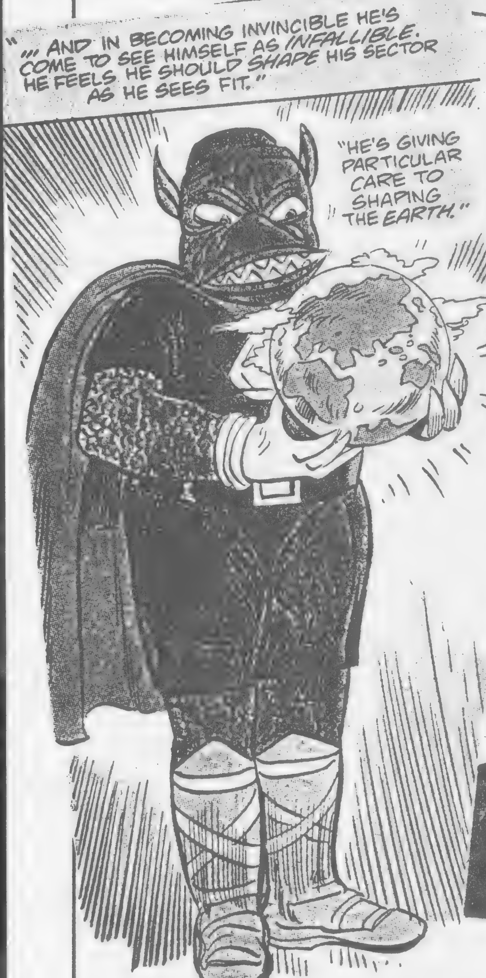
WELDON: I have a question.

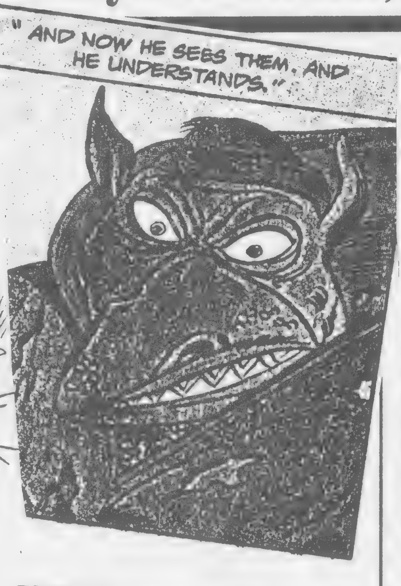
MARTIN: Go.

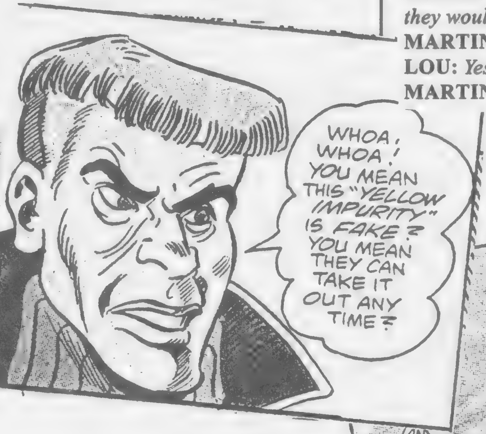
WELDON: What's with some of the pen names that you used?

MARTIN: Oh, pen names that I used? I used just one. And that goes back to my original story. I used “Mart Dellon.” I was being trained for advertising. I was interested in advertising. I wanted to get into it. That was where the big money was, like a hundred bucks a week in those days. However, I found that I couldn't get advertising work, as I mentioned earlier. So I went toward comics, but I thought, “I'll just stay a short while, maybe two weeks, one month, two months” . . . a short period of time. And that way, be-

“I don’t own any of my own work; I don’t own the


“... AND IN BECOMING INVINCIBLE HE'S COME TO SEE HIMSELF AS INFALLIBLE. HE FEELS HE SHOULD SHAPE HIS SECTOR AS HE SEES FIT.”
“HE'S GIVING PARTICULAR CARE TO SHAPING THE EARTH.”


“AND NOW HE SEES THEM. AND HE UNDERSTANDS.”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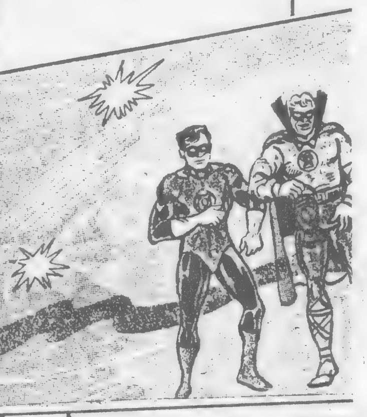
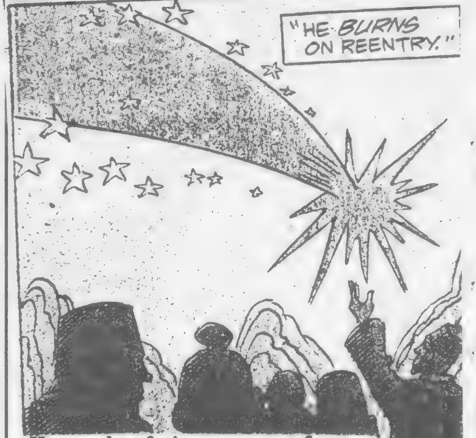



“HE BURNS ON REENTRY.”

Here and on facing page are a few panels of Martin’s recent artwork — GREEN LANTERN (third series) #19

cause comics were the lowest rung of the ladder of culture, of writing or reading material, that I’d better not be associated with comics if I was going to go into advertising. So I’ve heard advertising people whom I got to know that there was some sort of dislike for people who were in comics in the first place.

CARRIE: Comics were the lowest rung of the ladder.

MARTIN: So this is one reason why I don’t own any of my own work. I don’t own any of the comics; I don’t own a $33,000 ALL-AMERICAN #16. *(Laughter.)*

CARRIE: Two fans have sent me tattered copies.

MARTIN: Copies of GREEN LANTERN.

CARRIE: Number 2, and #11.

MARTIN: Those were the quarterlies.

LOU: *Were you around for the creation of Doiby Dickles, GL’s old sidekick.*

MARTIN: Right.

LOU: *With his cab Goitrude, and his little Green Lantern suit, and all that.*

MARTIN: That I worked on with **Bill Finger.** And for the most part, the ideas came from **Mayer,** and some from **Finger.** By the way, I will mention something about **Bill Finger.** Some people have mentioned a lot of negative things about **Finger,** asking me if this is true, or that is true, about **Bill Finger.** One: Was he a great womanizer? I don’t know. He wouldn’t tell me, anyway. *(Laughter.)* Number two: Was he always late with his work, and were his deadlines never on time? Or did he drink a lot, was he a carouser, was he not the nicest guy? I knew nothing like that about him at all. And I knew a lot of people in the business that were that type.

Alfred Bester did some of my work later on, as a GL scripter, before some of the TV, radio, science-fiction and motion picture work that he did. So he did some of the Green Lantern scripting, too.

LOU: *Solomon Grundy. He created Solomon Grundy.*

MARTIN: I think so. But going back — I had created, not an oath, but an incantation. And I felt that would be the way we’d go, from the incantation to the lantern, as to how Alan Scott dressed as the hero, and then go on to do all the good things he does. So it seemed to me that if he could do that sort of thing, an incantation was always necessary. But **Bill Finger** is the one — **Sheldon Mayer** is greatly responsible, too, for honing it, shaping it into an oath. And **Bester,** plus a few others, put it into poetry. So the initial one — “In darkest night” — was between mine, **Bill Finger’s,** and **Mayer’s.**

LOU: *I asked Alfred Bester if he did the oath, because everybody thinks he did it. And he was very emphatic about it. He said, “Never, never, never, never!” He said he tried to get them to take it out, but they wouldn’t do it.*

MARTIN: Take out the oath?

LOU: *Yes!*

MARTIN: **Mayer** wouldn’t!

comics; I don’t own a $33,000 ALJ ERICAN #16.”

LOU: *No.*

CARRIE: Fans of today love it. And they can all recite it for us . . .

LOU: *“In brightest day, in darkest night . . .”*

CARRIE: It’s amazing how many people have it down pat.

LOU: *Exactly how did Doiby come about? Did Green Lantern just have to have somebody to talk to, or what?*

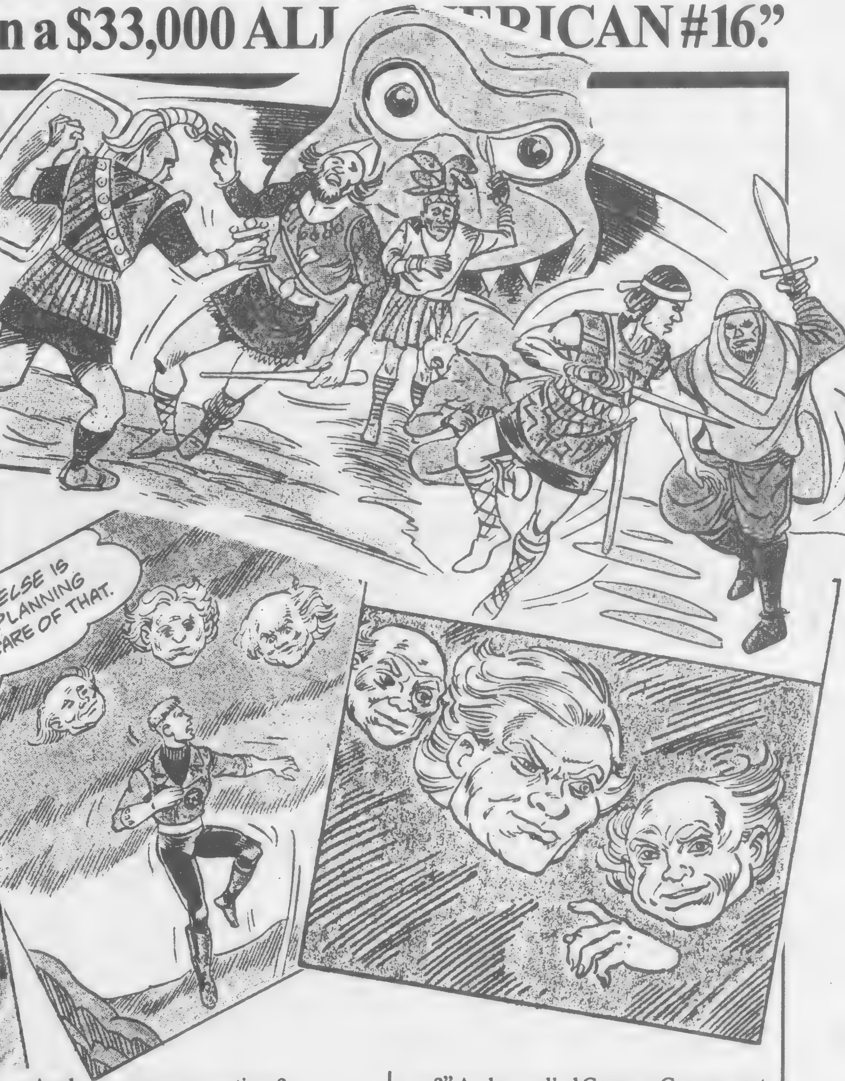
MARTIN: No, that was between **Mayer** and **Finger.** The idea was, we were talking about what would be the best way to bring up and use another character that Green Lantern can play off of. Maybe add a little humor, too.

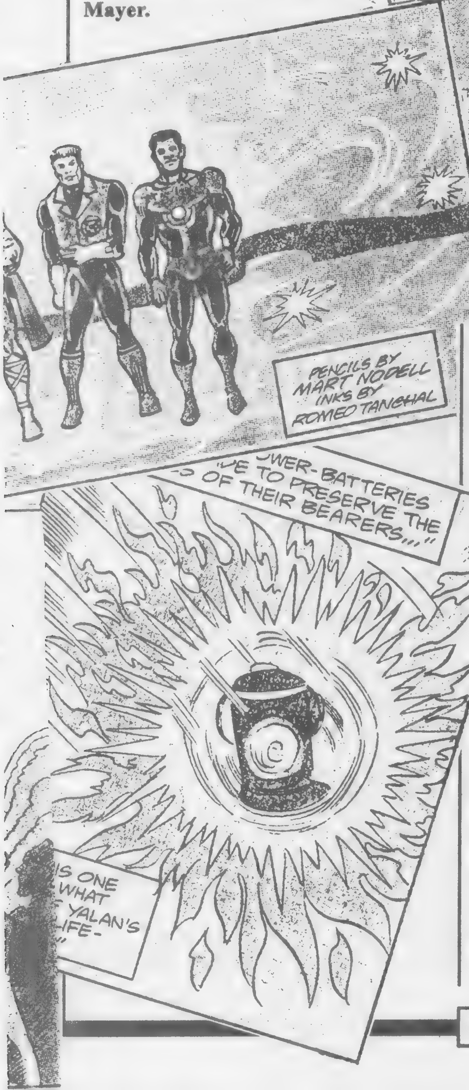
CARRIE: Wouldn’t you say that at that time, New York was famous for its cabbies?

LOU: *Oh, yeah. It still is.*

CARRIE: It still is, but now they’re not as friendly as Doiby Dickles was. Doiby was a friend of everybody.

MARTIN: Doiby was a character that was more between **Bill Finger** and **Mayer.**





PENCILS BY MART NODELL INKS BY ROMEO TANGHAL

Anyb y have any questions?

QUESTION FROM AUDIENCE: *How did you get involved back in comics, especially with the ALL-STAR SQUADRON and SECRET ORIGINS with Roy Thomas?*

CARRIE: The one in 1984? **Roy Thomas** called him and asked him.

MARTIN: I didn’t know Roy. I only knew his name from motion pictures. He called me, asked me if I wanted to do something . . .

CARRIE: Do the folks know how you came back to comics? Everyone thought he was gone, dead or whatever. And nobody had heard from him. And we found out, through Moondog’s, **Gary Colabuono** worked on the same paper that Marty did. He was a space salesman, and Marty did the special covers for this paper before we moved from Chicago. I read small print; I saw **“Gary Colabuono,** comic-book buff.” So I said to Marty, “You’re going to the office to say so long to your manager, your bosses, your publisher. Why don’t you look Gary up?” And we called Gary up. Gary ran out — he told me this last year at the Diamond Seminar — ran out, bought a tape recorder, and taped Marty for four hours. He was so excited. And last year, when Marty got the award, Gary was standing and crying in the corner; he was so proud that he had brought him back to comics. And he said, “You’re coming to the Chicago Con, you’re sitting at my table, you’ll see how the fans react to you.”

MARTIN: This is what, ’82, ’83?

CARRIE: I don’t know the years; you’re good at that. It was unreal, the reception we received. So here we are, fifteen years later, seventeen years later. We’re going strong.

LOU: *If I had my way we could do another couple to three hours, if Marty’s voice could hold out that long. But they’re giving me the eye from that side of the room, and I think they want to dump us out of here.* (Laughter.) *But, Martin and Carrie, we want to thank you very much for being out this way, and thanks for talking to us.* (Applause.) ▢

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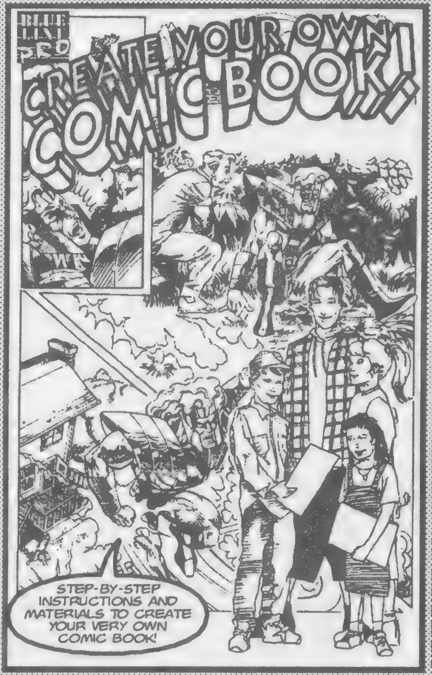
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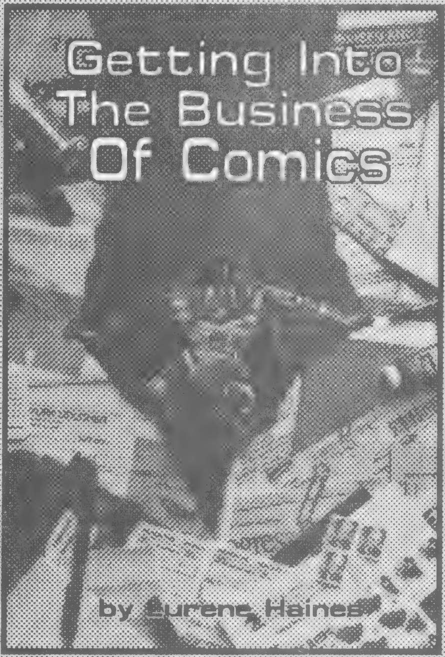

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LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

Dear Sir:

I am hoping you can help me. I'm trying to find someone to tell me the value of the comic book I have. It is a second edition of one of Carl Barks. It is in mint condition and is signed by him. I have a note by his secretary who verifies this. I also would like to know if he is still alive.

Thank you,
Patty Barrand
Box 223
Woodburn, IN 46797

No, I'm afraid we can not tell you the value of a comic book identified only as "a second edition of one of Carl Barks." Carl Barks wrote and drew approximately 500 comic book stories.

Even if we knew which comic you're talking about, we would sidestep the question with the observation that the value of it lies in the story it contains, not, as your question implies, in the money that you may or may not be able to get for it. One of the greatest problems besetting the comics industry today is that many, if not most, of the comics sold in the past few years have gone not to people interested in their contents, but to those interested only in what they'd be "worth" in the future. Now that the speculators realize what a poor investment they've sunk their money into, they are abandoning us in favor of gum cards, celebrity photos, or whatever other overhyped gewgaw the Home Shopping Network and its ilk are touting as having "value," and the comics industry is struggling to regain equilibrium. My heart goes out to the sincere fans and producers of gum cards, celebrity photos and whatnot, but frankly — better them than us.

Mr. Barks, by the way, is very much alive. But fear not. He's in his 90s, so the "value" of your autograph will shoot up before you know it.

— Don Markstein

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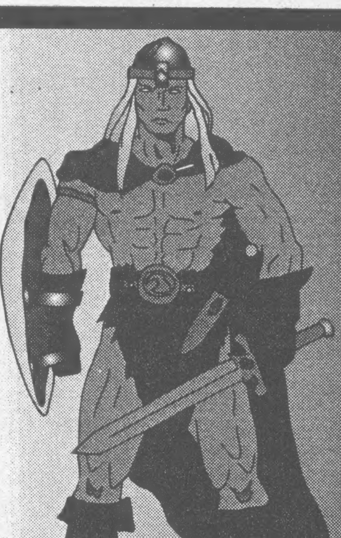

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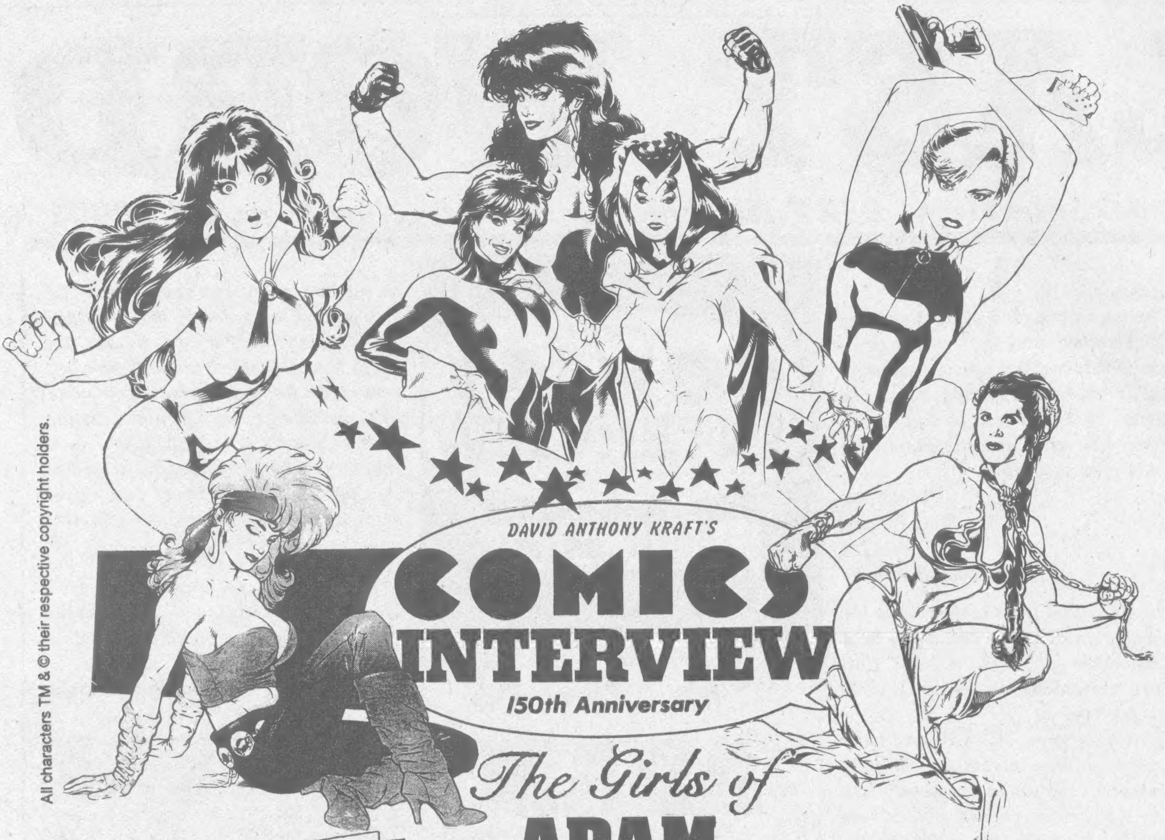

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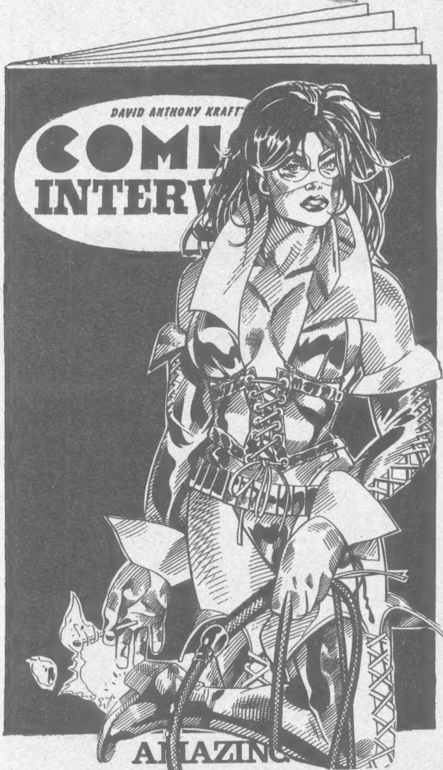

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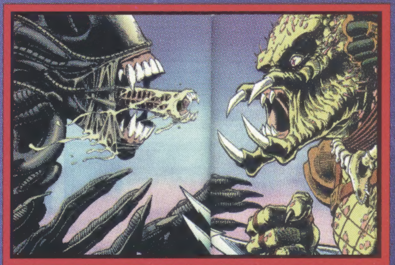

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